

The Ethically Responsible Consumer

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Ball State University

Muncie, Indiana

April 2015

Expected Date of Graduation

May 2015

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Abstract

The global production and consumption system is broken. What we produce here in the United States is unethical and unsustainable. If our food waste were its own nation, its carbon footprint would rank third largest globally. Ever-industrializing monocultures, prohibitive legislation, and a shift toward nutrient-void, hyper-processed meals threaten to turn half the world into an oasis of useless excess and the other half into a food desert. How can a person live within this established, deeply flawed framework while making an effort to disrupt its dominance and change its structure from the inside? *The Ethically Responsible Consumer* project attempts to provide one potential answer to that question. For three months in 2015 I strove to demonstrate how an average citizen--a college student with limited time and a modest budget--could live a sustainable lifestyle that advocated for social equity, environmental health, and economic justice. During this time every item I consumed had to either be fair-trade certified, locally-produced, or up-cycled in some way (i.e. dumpster-dived or second-hand). An account of my journeys is documented through a series of daily blog posts that detailed my struggles and accomplishments, my findings and conclusions.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Gerald Waite for advising me through this project.

I would also like to thank Dr. Barbara Stedman for her input and guidance.

Many thanks to all the Ball State professors who have provided me with the knowledge and opportunities that set me on the path towards my passion for sustainability.

Many thanks to Colin, Zissou, Kathie, Julie, and Kevin for their support throughout the duration of this project.

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The United Nations' Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development states that "Fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development. All countries should promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, with the developed countries taking the lead and with all countries benefiting from the process..." (2002). Ralph Nader, in a PBS broadcast, described our mode of producing and consuming goods as "a subordination of human rights, of labor rights, consumer, environmental rights, democracy rights, to the imperatives of global trade and investment" (1998). Though years have passed since these experts have shared their observations, the United States' current industrial production system for foods and other goods could still be described as deeply flawed, unethical, and unsustainable. As this thesis project illustrates, the means of production and consumption that stand as the status-quo are detrimental to humans all over the world and to the overall environment. Unfair labor standards, resource-intensive agriculture and manufacturing, and high levels of waste are all inherent facets of modern first-world production and consumption; however, these degenerative factors do not have to continue to be part of our consumer reality. Through the Ethically Responsible Consumer project, I sought to become one experimental example of how daily consumption habits can illustrate the problems with the current production and consumption system, can subvert the system's unethical standards, and can promote a more sustainable system.

My experience at Ball State University has been unique insofar I eschewed a traditional program of study and instead created my own major. My personalized program, which I christened "Sustainable Development in Emergent Communities," focuses largely on promoting environmental welfare and social justice. Similarly, my minor in "International Resource Management" centers on learning how communities can use their ecological landscape and their

human potential to create a healthy, vibrant systems in which all people and biological beings can thrive. Through these programs, I have used my time as an undergraduate student to analyze ways in which I can personally work to promote these sustainable patterns of living. Through my senior thesis project, I sought to synthesize the knowledge I have gained in the fields of sustainable development, environmental ethics, systems thinking, industrial food, and social justice in order to implement academic theory as real-life practice and experience. Furthermore, because I hope to pursue sustainable community development as a career, I realized the need for more than the secondhand accounts and academic theories garnered through course material in order to support my work, worldview, and credibility.

A system or society's sustainability is inextricably linked to its inputs and outputs, or its production and consumption. The patterns by which humans create, utilize, and dispose of goods have enormous effects on their communities, natural environments, and even on their economies. These three affected entities, indeed, make up the three pillars of a sustainable system; the environment, the community, and the economy are known as the "triple bottom line" of sustainability since all three must be intact and well-functioning in order for a system to infinitely maintain or sustain itself (Elkington, 1998). Because high rates of rapid consumption and a culture of disposability often characterize the average American's role in our own country's ecological, social, and financial landscape, and therefore render our system less sustainable, I determined that altering my own consumer habits would be one of the most effective ways to practice a sustainable lifestyle. This thesis project was therefore designed to aid me in developing firsthand knowledge of what it means to live sustainably on a daily basis in order to decrease my personal negative impact on my fellow humans and the environment. In doing so, I intended that my experience would help me better understand our system's flaws,

better develop solutions for the communities and individuals with whom I hope to work in the future, and help me personally live a more conscientious lifestyle following the completion of the experiment.

Because sustainability ensures that people and systems thrive, to promote sustainability is to live ethically. The experiment in and of itself originally stipulated that over the course of three months (from January 1 to April 1), I would undergo a creative project in which I would consume only goods that met certain ethical standards. These ethical guidelines were set in place in an effort to mitigate my own negative ecological, social, and economic impact as a consumer and in order to serve as a test to determine the extent to which such a lifestyle ethic is possible for the average person. In doing so, I sought to examine the limitations of this project in order to determine common limitations to a sustainable lifestyle.

The specific standards, the necessity of which were supported with scholarly literature and data, mandated that I only consume goods that were locally produced or grown myself, fair trade, or scavenged from local garbage receptacles or publicly available wild food sources such as fruit trees. Additionally, having been a vegetarian for the past four years for sustainability-centered and ethical reasons, my project mandated that I continue to eschew meat and meat byproducts such as gelatin and leather. Throughout the course of this project, I monitored my consumer habits on a public blogging website in order to be held accountable to my lifestyle changes and to generate an audience for my project.

The rationalization for my ethical consumer criteria as outlined in my “Ethically Responsible Consumer Manifesto” can be found in full in my thesis Appendix A, but is summarized as thus:

Throughout my studies of industrial production, especially in regards to agriculture, it has become clear to me that consuming foods and goods that are sourced from local, small-scale systems can aid in the strengthening of economies, the improvement of ecological health, and the empowerment of people and communities.

The revenue generated by small farms is more likely to stay within the local community and be used to improve services, infrastructure, recreation, and civic participation. Similarly, the lower levels of overall mechanization in small-scale agriculture and production allow for an increase in human-labor jobs, as well as the increase in jobs that occurs when local stores, schools, and public service providers thrive. Globally, small-scale production prevents the negative effects of mass production and industrialization which leave subsistence-based communities vulnerable (Logdson, 2001).

Locally-based consumption is environmentally ethical; industrial food production wastes land and resources while desiccating local biodiversity and harming remaining resources. This waste and degradation occurs during production and transportation. Industrial farming requires far more, energy and space inputs than its yields warrant, often using water and space inefficiently and overusing petrochemical-based fertilizers and potentially toxic pesticides (Hoffman, 2013). The carbon emissions associated with industrially grown goods is also significantly higher than their local counterparts due to the huge fuel costs in transporting foods around the world (Pirog, 2005). Conversely, local agriculture is uniquely suited to the community for which it provides and is generally a small-scale closed-loop system in which all inputs are cycled efficiently through the system and little is wasted or harmed (Hoffman, 2013).

Finally, local production and consumption is socially ethical and sustainable; small-scale, community-centered food production ensures that healthy, easy-to-access, low-cost food is

available even to impoverished, marginalized societies. It also ensures that consumers those in are intimately aware of where their food comes from, whether they have grown it themselves or are able to engage in direct trade with a local producer. This empowers consumers with the awareness of where and how their food is produced (Rossett, 1999; Oregon State Extension Faculty, 2015).

Fair trade goods, whether they are material or foodstuffs, are certified through the following criteria: that they provide producers with a living wage and fair labor, that they are directly traded, that they foster socio-economic development, and that certain environmental conservation standards are met. Because of these criteria, fair trade products are often an ethical decision for consumers.

Fair trade goods are produced in a way that guarantees a fair price and fair labor conditions. A fair price covers the cost of production and the amount of money needed to provide workers with a living wage. A living wage is defined as enough payment to allow a person to acquire adequate food, shelter, clothing, education, and healthcare for themselves and any dependents in the place they live. Fair labor entails that all workers will be given safe, sanitary working conditions and enforces strict labor laws in order to ensure that workers are treated fairly and are of legal working age (Fair Trade International, 2011).

Fair trade mandates that foods are traded in the most direct manner possible. Direct trade eliminates unnecessary middlemen in the trade process, which allows producers to be more involved with the trade process, giving them more say in what happens to their product and allowing them better business opportunities and greater business skills. It the ecological footprint associated with the transportation of the good (Fair Trade International, 2011).

Because fair trade offers producers better wages and business skills, farmers and artisans are able to reinvest the money they make back into their families and their community. Children can go to school, jobs are created, and community services and infrastructure such as hospitals, roads, and businesses are generated. Fair trade also grants marginalized groups greater social and economic mobility and autonomy. With the support of fair trade buyers, these marginalized people can make livings for themselves and gain more of a voice within their families and their communities (Fair Trade International, 2011).

Fair trade producers must adhere to a certain set of environmental standards; these include requirements to protect and manage their land and resources; restrict the use of petroleum-based pesticides and fertilizers; and ban the use of genetically engineered crops. These stipulations ensure that the farms operated by fair trade producers are more sustainable and are a beneficial component to a healthy ecosystem (Fair Trade International, 2011).

Globally, one third of all food that is produced is wasted annually (Gustavsson, 2011). In the United States alone, 40% of our food is thrown away. On a pre-consumer level, waste occurs when foods are rejected by harvesters, packagers, and distributors as a result of cosmetic deficiencies or improper storage and subsequent spoilage. Post-consumer waste is often a result of buyers storing goods improperly, again resulting in spoilage, restaurant diners receiving too-large portion sizes, and consumers disposing of goods that are ostensibly past their sell-by date but are still fine to eat (Gunders, 2013).

When food is wasted, resources are wasted; the annual amount of wasted food translates to a loss of \$750 billion every year, and 28% of the earth's arable land that is used to grow wasted food. Human resources are wasted as well; if none of the world's food was thrown away,

each person on earth would have 2831 calories to eat every single day. As it stands, around one in eight people around the world suffer from chronic hunger (FAO, 2013).

Not only are resources wasted, but shared resources such as the atmosphere are damaged. As food waste rots, it releases carbon dioxide and methane, which contribute to atmospheric warming and global climate change. In fact, were food waste as an entity considered a nation, it would be the third-largest producer of greenhouse gas in the world only after the United States and China, releasing roughly 3.3 billion tons annually (FAO, 2013).

The systematic mistreatment of agricultural workers within the industrial food system and my desire to avoid supporting such a system is another reason why I enacted these ethical criteria. Roughly 80% 3 million people of the agricultural workforce in the United States, totaling 3 million people is made up of migrant workers, over half of whom are undocumented (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2013). In addition to the backbreaking work and low pay they must endure, workers are often denied basic rights such as adequate shelter, sanitation, electricity, transportation, and medical care. Furthermore, workers may be unprotected from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse (Bhatnagar, 2009).

Agricultural and food service workers such as processors or packers are regularly cheated out of their wages and subjected to debt servitude by having to purchase their own uniforms, tools, and other necessary job-related equipment or by having to pay high rent to employer-owned apartments. In many cases, they are held virtually captive by employers who seize and hold their identifying documents (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2013).

These workers are regularly subject to hazardous working conditions and denied medical benefits or worker's compensation for on-the-job injuries; women are also especially vulnerable

to on-the-job sexual harassment or assault. Workers who miss work due to illness, on-the-job injuries, family responsibilities, or a lack of transportation; or who cannot work non-optional “overtime” hours, are threatened with the loss of their job. Ultimately, workers who complain about their work conditions or pay are deported (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2013).

My choice to be a vegetarian stems from beliefs rooted in both the ethics of animal rights and the ethics of environmental sustainability. Philosophically, I believe that animals are sentient direct morally considerable beings. Being “directly morally considerable” means that a being or entity inherently deserves to have its wellbeing considered by agents making moral decisions—that is, its welfare is a factor in moral or ethical decision making (Singer, 1975). This decision making is based off of beings’ basic, serious, and peripheral welfare; that which is required for survival and/or happiness from most to least necessary. I do not view the sacrifice of an animal’s life, its basic welfare, as an ethical exchange for my enjoyment of its meat, my peripheral welfare (VanDeVeer, 2003).

In addition to the purely philosophical reasons that I do not eat animals, I regard vegetarianism and veganism as ethical choices because the environmental and societal effect of eating industrially-raised meat, dairy, or eggs is overwhelmingly negative. Pollution is one of the most significant impacts of industrialized animal husbandry. Most meat, dairy, and egg products consumed in the United States originate in concentrated animal feeding operations, also known as CAFOs (Scully, 2002). Most CAFOs contain a large number of animals within a confined space, and these facilities produce a great deal of waste which must be contained in a relatively small area. Most CAFO waste is stored in “digesting lagoons.” This waste is so high in contaminants that it often cannot be used as fertilizer and can pose threats to human and

environmental welfare (Gurian-Sherman, 2008). Eutrophication of river and ocean habitats and the contamination of drinking water can occur when lagoons leak or overflow (Marks, 2011).

The production and consumption of meat also requires a far greater amount of resources than does the production of plant-based foods. Animals consume more than they produce; calorie for calorie, meat is ultimately a negative output because an animal will be slaughtered into less food than was necessary to raise it. All the food needed by livestock requires arable land to be grown; in all, the cattle, pigs, and chickens raised for meat consume 70% of all grain produced worldwide. 2.5 acres of beef production could support one person's caloric needs for a year; chicken could support two people. However, fifteen people could get sufficient calories from 2.5 acres of wheat, nineteen by potatoes, and twenty-three by cabbage. Though none of these foods alone would provide sufficient nutrition, the amount of land that is effectively wasted by industrial meat production is starkly clear (Robbins, 2001).

Not only does meat require intensive caloric and land input, it requires huge amounts of water, which is required to grow the foods consumed by livestock, to water the animals themselves, and to process animal carcasses. Beef requires over 5,000 gallons of water per pound. Putting that into perspective, the average American's annual water usage for showers is around the same amount. Pork clocks in around 1,600 gallons, and a pound of chicken takes just over 800 gallons of water to produce. Conversely, wheat and potatoes each need 25 gallons per pound. Even water-intensive crops such as legumes require fewer gallons than even chicken; the chickpea requires 500 gallons per pound (Robbins, 2001).

Though the standards for my ethically responsible consumer thesis project were stringent, the day-to-day reality of living my project was less of a struggle than I had feared it would be before beginning. My family had worried at the impetus of my project that I would not be able to

get enough food to eat; this concern did not turn out to be a problem. Acquiring sufficient food and fulfilling my overall nutritional needs was not difficult, though it was more inconvenient than simply grocery shopping. Dumpster-diving turned out to be the way in which I garnered the majority of my comestible goods; having already had several years' experience dumpster-diving, I regard it as something of a pastime or adventure. Though going through a grocery store's trash is a more awkward way to get food, it was my opinion throughout my three month project that it was more fun and exciting than going to a supermarket. There was certainly always enough food to choose from, in both quantity and variety and I was always comfortably fed.

Family members also expressed concerns that I would not be safe dumpster-diving for food; that I would get in trouble, or that I would get sick from eating what they regarded as essentially garbage. Again, this turned out not to be an issue: as I stated in my "Scavenging" informational section of my blog and Ethical Consumer Manifesto, "The laws where I live stipulate that it is illegal to access a dumpster only if the receptacle is touching the building by which it is used, if it specifically has a 'no trespassing' sign on it, or if it is locked or surrounded by a locked fence" (Hart, 2015; Berg, 2014). Given those guidelines, I was able to safely and legally access grocery store dumpsters that did not fit those criteria. In terms of food safety, I have always been very careful to not pick discarded foods that could make me sick. As my aforementioned "Scavenging" informational page details,

I always avoid dumpster food that smells funky, looks mushy or soggy, is in close proximity to meat, spilled milk, or broken eggs, is overly moldy, or is leaking...I do a preliminary check for all these criteria while actually gathering the food in the dumpster, then another check on whatever goods I bring home right after unloading them all, then a third check before I eat an item [Hart, 2015].

I also took care to meticulously clean all of my dumpster-dived foods over the course of my project, rinsing fruits and vegetables in a vinegar-water solution and transferring dry goods from their original packaging into my own freshly-washed glass containers.

Another concern expressed by my father-in-law was that my dumpster-diving activities could be taking food from extremely needy people, such as Muncie's homeless population. To that quandary, I reply that I never take more food than I can personally use in a short period of time. I went dumpster-diving approximately once every ten days, gathering as much as I could eat in about a week and a half. Given that the dumpsters I visited almost always held about four times as much food as I could take, and that they presumably held that same amount of food for the nine days out of ten that I did not visit, I was not concerned that I could have been depriving others of food through my practices.

I noted in my "Scavenging" informational section of my blog that dumpster-diving is not feasible for everyone; some people may have specific dietary needs and may require a strict, scheduled diet; others may have weaker immune systems or sensitive stomachs and would not be able to risk getting sick from dumpster-dived foods. Furthermore, dumpster-diving as I practiced over the course of three months is actually an inherently unsustainable method of gaining food; if everyone were to do it, trash bins would soon run out of goods and supermarkets would be outraged at the lack of business. However, as I have noted, much of this project has been devoted to illustrating the problems with our modern mode of consumerism by subverting consumer standards. Indeed, not everyone can and not everyone should dumpster-dive, but through the refusal to purchase supermarket goods and the converse reclaiming of wasted food, my project has pointed out the brokenness of a system that exploits workers and destroys the environment to produce goods that have a 40% chance of ending up in a waste bin (Gunders, 2013).

Though my thesis experiment ran more smoothly than I anticipated in many ways, there were struggles and challenges over the course of my three months that ought to be addressed. One of the things I consistently missed the most consistently throughout the project was the spontaneity and the variety that is inherent to typical mainstream consumerism; rather than being able to order a garment offline on a whim, grab any tube of toothpaste off a drugstore shelf, or walk into a grocery store and get almost anything I could ever want to eat, I had to carefully plan and research each purchase. While not being able to make impulse purchases certainly saved money, being very premeditated in everything I consumed certainly cost time.

My January 14th blog post in which I discussed the quandary of running out of deodorant illustrates the necessary lack of impulsiveness and the required planning inherent to making ethical decisions;

...finding preexisting deodorants that have ethically sourced ingredients can be tricky. I did find a salt-crystal deodorant bar that claims to be made out of “100% fair trade Himalayan Salts.” With shipping, this bar would be about \$11.50 and it looks like it would last a pretty long time- ... I’ve also toyed with the idea of making my own deodorant. The most basic recipes I’ve found call for only four ingredients: coconut oil, arrowroot powder or corn starch, baking soda, and essential-oil-of-choice...Buying all those ingredients would be more of an initial cost than just getting the \$11 bar of salt, but I think I could get more batches of deodorant by making my own, and I feel like my homemade recipe might work better than mineral salts [Hart, 2015].

I went with the second homemade option, stating in my January 17th journal that “I ended up deciding...to try my hand at making my own deodorant rather than buying the mineral salt crystal thing online. I got most of my ingredients for it from a locally run business, so I felt better about doing it this way rather than ordering something from someone halfway across the country” (Hart, 2015). I purchased fair trade Dr. Bronner’s brand coconut oil and fair trade Rapunzel brand corn starch from the Downtown Farm Stand, a local health food store, and

acquired fair trade tea tree oil from a store in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The cost for everything was about \$30.00, but the single batch I made using about one-fifth of the coconut oil, one-half the corn starch, and 20 drops of tea tree oil made the equivalent of three tubes of deodorant. It was certainly cost-effective and it was definitely an ethical consumer choice, though the time investment was significantly higher than simply buying deodorant at a corner store. It is my conclusion, however, that an all-natural, fair-trade-ingredient personal hygiene product that takes a little more time is ultimately a choice that is worth it for me.

Another challenge was the relative difficulty of acquiring food compared to simply shopping at a grocery store. Seeking out fair trade goods, visiting the winter farmer's market once a month for locally produced fare, and dumpster-diving regularly took more planning and more time than a weekly trip to a supermarket. In my January 5th journal entry on my blog, I describe the first dumpster-diving outing of the project:

This evening, my husband and I went to a few local grocery stores that toss out produce, canned and boxed goods, eggs, and drinks every single day...Our haul was a little smaller than usual, and the weather while we were diving can only be described as *stupidly* cold. However, I still got some good stuff! A loaf of garlic bread, a green bell pepper, a cucumber, a dozen eggs, probably 20 limes, three pounds of bagged collard greens, a bag of grapes with a broken zipper, and two cans of biscuit dough that had come in a four-pack and were missing their mates. The weather did have the benefit of ensuring that there was no water collecting in the bottom of the bins, which is honestly the grossest part about dumpster-diving [Hart, 2015].

Because I chose to undergo my project during the coldest months of the year, I often dealt with sub-zero weather and falling snow while dumpster-diving for food. Additionally, because I only searched dumpsters after stores' closing hours, getting food meant going out late at night in the dark. This situation was measurably less comfortable than the average grocery-shopping trip; however, being able to acquire cost-free food while marginally lowering food-waste amounts

and not contributing my consumer dollar to a flawed industrial production system made the discomfort worth it. The cold weather had its own benefits, as well; as I mentioned, there was no pooling water in the receptacles as can happen in warmer months, and the food stayed cold enough that rotting was not an issue.

Taking aside the physical and logistical challenges of my project, there were also social and personal challenges. I came to my first stumbling block in the first days of my project as I was visiting family members of Christmas break. For the first few days of the project I chose to consume what was offered to me while traveling for politeness's sake; this occurred again when I visited family for spring break later in the project. It should be noted that the foods I consumed remained vegetarian, and largely organic and vegan during these visits in an effort to adhere as closely as possible to my ethical standards, and I only consumed coffee, tea, and chocolate that was fair-trade certified. There were also several days, especially during breaks while travelling, that I did not have access to the internet. On these days, and on days where I was very busy with other academic work and when the university's internet connection in my apartment was spotty, I was not able to record my consumption habits on my blog, and as such there are several days that lack adequate documentation. For example, there is a span of a week and a half between February 11 and February 21 on my blog where I was unable to post; on the 21st I made an effort to provide an overview of my previous 9 days' consumption habit.

Retrospectively, my meals have composed largely of rice... combined with various dumpster-dived vegetables such as peppers, kale, carrots, and cilantro pesto. I ran out of those vegetables about two days ago so I will have to go dumpster-diving soon. I've also been eating a fair amount of dumpster-dived bread and oatmeal, as well as apples and yogurt... [Hart, 2015].

Upon beginning my project I had not anticipated having difficulty in logging my consumer patterns every day, but it turned out to be more of a challenge than I expected.

On February 21st, my biggest stumble occurred when I broke my ethical manifesto's rules twice by going out to eat at two different restaurants. As with visiting family, in both situations it was again an issue of being polite;

The first dinner outing was with my husband, a couple of mutual friends, and a professor at our college who has been promising to take us out for several months now. She finally had time to schedule a dinner, and it seemed like it would have been a disservice to everyone if I had declined and suggested putting off our outing for another month... The second incident of the night was when my husband and I were invited to an after-party at Applebee's for the opening night of a theatre production we worked on. Again, it seemed bad form to decline... [Hart, 2015].

I did make some choices while eating out that adhered to my ethical standards, such as choosing only vegan foods and picking a drink that was produced more locally than the other options.

We ate at a little, local Indian restaurant here in Muncie, where I ordered black lentils and rice. The restaurant is a local small business, and the food was vegan... I didn't really eat [at Applebee's] - I snacked on some appetizers (fried green beans and tortilla chips) that the table had ordered, and I ordered an Old Fashioned. Again, everything was vegetarian- and the bourbon in my drink was produced in Clermont, KY, which (though by no means "local") is only about 3 hours away from where I live... [Hart, 2015].

This day, in addition to the times where I went out to eat with my husband and only ordered a locally-brewed beer in order to maintain my ethical standards, showed me that it can be very difficult to make completely ethical choices when consuming outside the home. While some restaurants boast local fare or serve fair-trade teas and coffees, these establishments are few and far between, especially in towns like Muncie, Indiana.

As can be expected with a three-month experiment, I made some changes over the course of my project. Perhaps one of my most significant changes was my pointed shift from focusing on all types of consumer goods to focusing more deeply on my food consumption. This is due to my already vested interest in food security, food production, and local agriculture; because my major has largely come to be based around those themes, it was natural for me to focus more

rigorously on the food-related aspects of my project. While I only consumed personal products (such as toothpaste, soap, deodorant, lip balm) that fit in with my ethical standards, I did not document that use as stringently; often, I regarded my daily consumption of those goods as a given and did not document them on a day-by-day basis. Furthermore, I found that I did not need to purchase any new clothes, housewares, or pet-care products over the course of my project's three months, so did not have the need to document that information.

One change was proposed to me during my project which, though I chose not to enact it, I will still address; about two weeks before my project was slated to end my advisor suggested I keep a record of nutritional information. While this was not part of my original proposal, I realized that this would have been good information to know from the onset of the project in order to quantify the feasibility of my project for other people and track whether or not the moral and ethical benefits were offset by any personal medical or nutritional detriments. Though I was not able to complete a nutritional analysis of my diet, I did keep careful records more days of everything I had eaten, offering the audience a relatively comprehensive outline of my basic intake of the different food groups.

I did not notice any specific negative health impacts based on my changed diet; this is perhaps because I had a few weeks to ease into the project since I had several store-bought food items already available in my kitchen from before the impetus of the experiment. It could also be because my diet just did not change much: I was already a vegetarian and dumpster-diving semi-regularly for several years prior to this project, so the types and quantity of food I was consuming was not very different. I did note that I consumed a slightly higher quantity of refined sugars and carbohydrates over the course of my project than I would have ordinarily due to the proliferation of highly processed foods available in local dumpsters. Similarly, there were several

days or weeks interspersed throughout the three months where I was not able to acquire sufficient vegetables to meet my daily recommended requirements. This minor problem also would not have been an issue had I not partaken in my experiment in the winter. Had I undertaken this project in the spring, summer, or even the early fall months, I would have had easy access to a vast assortment of inexpensive, locally-produced fruits and vegetables from the Muncie Farmer's Market that runs weekly from May to October (Minnetrista, 2015). This would have made me less reliant on processed, scavenged foods to meet my caloric and nutritional needs. Despite this, my overall diet was approximately as balanced as usual, and comparable to that of the average American college student.

Another change that occurred was that of my intended audience exposure. At the impetus of my thesis, my intended audience for this project were people working within the field of sustainable development and a general population of individuals interested in issues relating to sustainability and responsible consumerism. I also intended on consolidating my project and its findings into a research article to be submitted for publication in an academic journal. Having completed my experiment, my audience for the project-based portion of my project was markedly more casual than I initially intended. I did not have an action plan for making the content of my daily blog visible to a sustainability-focused community outside my peer group; the extent of my sharing was limited to using my personal social media accounts to provide my friends, family, and acquaintances with daily updates and links to my blog posts. Fortunately, many of my friends and family are interested or involved with the movement towards sustainability, and were able to share my experiment with their environmental and social justice-focused communities. For example, my mother-in-law shared my project with her United Methodist Women's "Be Just, Be Green" organization; my experiment, though deemed

somewhat radical, was received well. In the last month of my project I did attempt to extend the scope of my experiment's exposure: I contacted Dave Ring, who owns and operates The Downtown Farm Stand, Muncie's local whole foods, organic grocery. It was my hope that he and his wife, who co-owns the store, would be willing to provide a link to my blog through their website or Facebook page in order to provide the Farm Stand's patrons with more information on sustainable, ethical solutions to the quandary of consumption. However, through I tried to make a connection with the Farm Stand repeatedly, my efforts at communication were never reciprocated.

Despite my minimal audience during the course of my three-month experiment, I will be submitting an article detailing my experience and my rationale for publication in a non-academic magazine. As previously stated, I initially intended to submit the methods and conclusions of my thesis as a scholarly article to an academically rigorous journal; however, it became clear several weeks into my project that such an experimental, personal thesis would not be the most conducive project from which to generate a scholarly article. Following the approval of my thesis, I will now be working to complete a more casual review and analysis of my ethical consumer experiment which will be submitted as a guest article to a local publication such as *Indiana Living Green* or Bloomington, Indiana's *Bloom Magazine*. This article, in addition to explaining the rationale for my project and describing some of my experiences, will also posit the question as to whether or not the average American can achieve ethically responsible consumerism. It is my hope that my experience practicing ethically responsible consumerism over the course of three months will interest and inspire subscribers to whichever magazine may publish my work.

Despite challenges and changes, I feel that through my ethically responsibly consumer project I achieved my goal of learning how to use my daily consumption habits to bring the problems with the current production and consumption system to light, and thereby reject the problematic system in favor of a sustainable, ethical manner of consuming. I plan on continuing with aspects of my thesis project even after I cease to document it; as I stated in my March 30th blog entry,

I'll definitely be holding on to as many of these standards as possible. In just a month the farmer's market will happen once a week, and I'll be able to get almost all of my produce and my eggs there. I'll continue dumpster-diving to get things like bread and non-seasonal fruits and vegetables... I'll keep buying fair trade whenever that option is available- coconut oil, coffee, tea, and chocolate. Even things like soap and housewares are readily available fair trade! I'll work to only buy things like clothes when they're necessary, and only then when they're secondhand or fair trade [Hart, 2015].

Since concluding my experiment, I am proud to state that I have thus stuck to my March 30th intention; though I have been to the grocery store twice already, I made a concerted effort to make sure that certain types of goods, such as tea and sugar, were fair trade and that I wasn't purchasing exotic, out-of-season fruits or vegetables. I have also been out dumpster-diving again, retrieving bread and a small selection of produce. I also feel that my project succeeded in reducing my negative environmental, social, and economic impacts. My financial savings over the course of these three months surprised me greatly; rather than spending around \$150 a month on food and other personal items as I usually do, I spent a total of around \$140 for the entire duration of the project. This included all my fair trade and farmer's market foods, my locally-produced beers and wines, and my fair-trade, cruelty-free lip balm.

Having gone through this experiment, there would be several recommendations and changes I would have for myself were I to repeat this project. The first change I would make to the project would be to undertake it in the spring, fall, or ideally in the summer. Finding locally-

produced food is infinitely easier to do in warmer months when farmer's markets, Community Supported Agriculture initiatives, and my personal gardens are in operation. A second change I would make would be to document the health and nutritional effects of this project; prior to beginning, I would get data on my own muscle mass and body fat percentages, my vitamin levels, and my weight. At intervals throughout and following the project, I would take the same measurements in order to discern whether or not living an ethically responsible consumer lifestyle was beneficial, neutral, or detrimental to my health. Finally, I would increase the awareness of my project through a more concentrated social media effort, by talking to groups or clubs of interested individuals around Ball State and Muncie, and by providing information outlets such as the Honors College *News and Notes* magazine and the Ball State Center for Peace and Conflict Studies biweekly newsletter with my blog updates.

I must point out that I am a privileged person and as such, what is feasible for me may not be for others. I come from a middle-class family and have two supportive parents, both of whom have good jobs and doctorate degrees. I have had the means to pursue a Bachelor's Degree and will likewise be able to pursue a Master's Degree. I am young and healthy, I have a part-time job and scholarships that help me pay my rent and cover other necessities, and I do not have children or other dependents of my own to support. I have the time, energy, and resources to be able to afford a vegetarian, fair trade, local, and dumpster-dived consumer lifestyle. With that in mind, I must reflect that many other people in the United States do not have the time to carefully research each of their purchases, the means to acquire ethically-sourced goods, or the health that would allow them to be vegetarian or to eat discarded food. Considering those limitations, I must also note that this project is not directed to influence those who cannot afford, in one way or another, to live an ethically contentious lifestyle. More often than not, the people

who cannot subvert the oppressive system of production and consumption are the ones who are actively being oppressed and exploited by it by the presence of unfair production jobs, food deserts, and environmental degradation, among other things.

The average middle- or upper-class American, however, can do plenty in order to live an ethically responsible consumer lifestyle and alleviate their own negative impact on the earth and on their fellow humans. Whenever and wherever possible, I do recommend dumpster-diving as a short-term ethical solution, since it is a way to reduce food waste and to avoid supporting corrupt production industries with one's consumer dollar. For more long-lasting sustainable solutions, it is not difficult for the typical U.S. citizen to incorporate local, fair trade, and vegetarian purchases into their consumer patterns. Within the Ball State and Muncie Community alone there are a myriad of options; the Minnetrista Farmer's Market, as I have mentioned, offers biweekly sales of inexpensive, locally-grown produce from May to October, and monthly sales of winter crops, honey, baked goods, and other fare during the winter and early spring; the Downtown Farm Stand and Winding Way Farms Health Foods are local stores that stock both locally-produced items and fair-trade goods. Online stores such as Ten Thousand Villages and Global Mamas provide fair-trade housewares, gifts, decorations, clothing, and accessories for reasonable prices and ship their products around the world. Reducing meat consumption is also surprisingly simple; global campaigns such as "Meatless Mondays" or "Vegetarian Before 6" provide the average American omnivore with ways to painlessly cut back on their meat-eating habits and simultaneously, on their negative environmental, social, and economic impact.

As cited in the introduction, the people of the United States live and operate under a flawed, unethical, unsustainable system of industrialized, out-of-control production and consumption. This system is harmful to our environment: it misuses and wastes natural

resources; it pollutes and degrades water, air, and land systems; and it contributes to global climate change. This system is harmful to our communities: it abuses marginalized people within its labor force; it promotes food insecurity and world hunger; and it prevents consumers from making informed, empowered decisions. This system is harmful to our global economy; it moves revenues away from local businesses and into large corporations; it prevents producers from making a living wage; and it slows the necessary development of business skills in small entrepreneurs and producers. Luckily, this consumer reality does not have to continue into our global future; as consumer ethics and food systems expert Anna Lappé states, “Every time you spend money, you're casting a vote for the kind of world you want” (2003). Through my Ethically Responsible Consumer thesis project, it is clear that the average American citizen can make changes in their daily consumer habits in order to demonstrate our current broken mode of creating and acquiring goods while working to promote an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable system.

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APPENDIX A: *The Ethically Responsible Consumer Manifesto and List of Standards*

Emily Hart's Ethically Responsible Consumer Manifesto

From January 1, 2015 to April 1, 2015, I will only consume food and drink that fit one or more of the following criteria:

1. Vegetarian

I do not believe that eating animals is an ethical choice in most cases. Similarly, I do not believe that eating most conventionally-produced industrial animal products, such as dairy, eggs, honey, or gelatin is an ethical choice. Because of this, my diet will be strictly vegetarian and I will only consume dairy, eggs, and honey that are scavenged or are locally produced by a farmer whose practices I deem humane.

Philosophically, I believe that animals are direct morally considerable beings. Being “directly morally considerable” means that a being or entity inherently deserves to have its wellbeing considered by agents making moral decisions- that is, its welfare is a factor in moral or ethical decision making. Different philosophers have had different ideas about what grants an entity direct moral considerability. Peter Singer outlines the direct moral considerability of animals in his 1975 publication “Animal Liberation;” here, he argues that because animals can consciously experience the world and can measurably experience suffering and pleasure, they are sentient creatures. Because ethical decisions of moral agents must take into account the potential

for a being to suffer as a result of said decision, animals are therefore directly morally considerable¹.

Donald VanDeVeer explains theoretical ways in which conflicting claims between multiple directly morally considerable beings may be adjudicated. His essay “Interspecific Justice” defines three levels of a being’s welfare that may be taken into account when making moral decisions: Basic Welfare is that which must be satisfied in order for a being or entity to maintain life, such as sufficient food, water, shelter, and oxygen. Serious Welfare is that which must be satisfied for a being or entity to lead a minimally decent life, such as specific nutritional criteria, sufficient privacy, sanitation, medical care, and the ability to engage in typical behavior. Peripheral Welfare is anything beyond Basic and Serious Welfare- it is anything which aids a being or entity to lead a life beyond essential survival. Nice clothes, access to television, a college education, and access to excess calories could be considered components of peripheral welfare. If one directly morally considerable being whose basic welfare is at stake is pitted against another directly morally considerable being whose peripheral welfare is at stake, it is generally more ethical to make a decision in the favor of the former².

To be succinct, I believe that all animals can suffer. Because animals can suffer, it is my moral duty as a moral agent to prevent and/or alleviate said suffering, which means that I will take into account the welfare of animal beings when making moral decisions. Therefore, when my peripheral enjoyment of eating a pork chop relies on the violation of the basic welfare (killing) of a sentient pig, I must make the moral decision to sacrifice my peripheral welfare for the pig’s basic welfare. When my peripheral enjoyment of eating a factory-farmed egg relies on

¹ Singer, P. (1975). *Animal Liberation*. New York: Random House.

² VanDeVeer, D. “Interspecific Justice” in *The Environmental Ethics & Policy Book* (3rd), Donald VanDeVeer and Christine Pierce (eds.) (Wadsworth, 2003), 150-163

the violation of the serious welfare (denial of species-appropriate nutrition, space, and behavioral expression) of a layer hen, I must make the moral decision to sacrifice my peripheral welfare for the hen's serious welfare.

In addition to the purely philosophical reasons that I do not eat animals, I regard vegetarianism and veganism as ethical choices because the environmental effect of eating industrially-raised meat, dairy, or eggs is overwhelmingly negative.

Pollution is one of the most significant impacts of industrialized animal husbandry. Most meat, dairy, and egg products consumed in the United States originate in concentrated animal feeding operations, also known as CAFOs³. Most CAFOs contain a large number of animals within a confined space, and these facilities produce a great deal of waste which must be contained in a relatively small area. This high concentration of manure must be treated and stored in anaerobic lagoons. Though livestock waste is ordinarily a staple in agriculture as a natural fertilizer, this manure is initially unusable for the purposes of field application because its nutrient concentrations are too high and would burn crops. This waste is also likely to be tainted with contaminants such as antibiotics, pathogens, animal remains, and heavy metals. After undergoing anaerobic digestion in lagoons, a portion of the manure may eventually be processed into fertilizer; however, even this manure may contain contaminants⁴.

It is not uncommon for anaerobic manure-digestion lagoons to leak and contaminate local water sources. Because the manure contains such a wide variety of contaminants, it is a significant threat to human health. Nitrates that leach from lagoons and into groundwater can be consumed by humans, increasing the risk of miscarriages and low blood oxygen levels in

³ Scully, M. (2002). *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin.

⁴ Gurian-Sherman, D. (2008). *Externalized Costs of CAFOs*. *CAFOs Uncovered: The Untold Costs of Confined Animal Feeding Operations*.

newborns. Nitrates and other plant-feeding nutrients can also enter waterways, causing algal blooms. This increase in algae deprives the water-body of oxygen, killing off other flora and fauna in a process known as eutrophication⁵.

Pathogens present in factory-farm manure can likewise harm humans and wildlife when they find their way into water systems; in 1993, 400,000 were sickened and around 100 people were killed when the protozoa *cryptosporidium* found its way out of a Wisconsin dairy operation's manure lagoon and contaminated Milwaukee's drinking water⁶. Wildlife is also susceptible to the disastrous effects of pathogen pollution from concentrated animal feeding operations; in Maryland and North Carolina, outbreaks of *pfisteria piscicida* have been linked to manure runoff from chicken and hog farms. This bacterium, the name of which translates to "fish killer," is aptly responsible for the deaths of millions of fish; it has also been suspected of causing skin irritation and cognitive problems in humans⁷. CAFO waste does not only cause destruction through water pollution; the stench of factory farming operations can affect property values for residents of rural communities. In 1999, residents of a small Missouri town noted that the smell from a nearby industrial hog farm was driving away prospective new residents and prompting existing residents to move away. This resulted in a marked decrease in all property values within a 3-mile radius of the CAFO, totaling a loss of 2.7 million dollars⁸.

⁵ Marks, R. (2001). Cesspools of Shame: How Factory Farm Lagoons and Sprayfields Threaten Environmental and Public Health. In N. Stoner, M. S. Flynn & E. Cousins (Eds.), Environmental Issues. Washington, D.C.: Natural Resources Defense Council The Clean Water Network.

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ Marks, R. (2001). Cesspools of Shame: How Factory Farm Lagoons and Sprayfields Threaten Environmental and Public Health. In N. Stoner, M. S. Flynn & E. Cousins (Eds.), Environmental Issues. Washington, D.C.: Natural Resources Defense Council The Clean Water Network.

⁸ Imhoff, Daniel. (2010) The CAFO: The Tragedy of Industrial Animal Farming. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

The proliferation of antibiotic-resistant bacteria that originate in concentrated animal feeding operations are another reason eschewing industrially-raised animal-sourced foods is an ethical decision.

CAFOs force animals to live in overly-close proximity to their waste, and speed requirements for processing livestock have quickened slaughter rates over the past several years. Because of this, it is almost impossible to ensure that fecal matter will not contaminate an animal's carcass upon slaughter. This poses a significant risk for human health, since excrement provides ideal breeding grounds for pathogens such as *E. coli* and *Salmonella*⁹. Already harmful to humans, these particular pathogens have become an even greater threat in recent years due to sub-therapeutic antibiotic use among large-scale farmers. Sub-therapeutic use mandates that antibiotics and other medications are regularly administered to livestock in order to promote growth and prevent disease outbreaks, rather than being only administered to treat illness on an as-needed basis. This manner of antibiotic use, while it initially destroys weaker strains, does not kill all bacteria. The surviving bacteria reproduce, resulting in new strains of stronger pathogens. Over time, this increases incidence of antibiotic-resistant (AR) bacteria¹⁰.

Tetracycline and penicillin are among the most common drugs used sub-therapeutically on livestock. As a result of this prolific use, many AR bacteria have built up resistances to these medications. This bodes poorly for humans infected with AR bacteria, since these drugs are commonly used in human medicine as well. The range of effective treatments for bacterial

⁹ Imhoff, D. (2010). *The CAFO: The Tragedy of Industrial Animal Farming*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

¹⁰ Silbergeld, G. (2008). "Industrial Food Animal Production, Antimicrobial Resistance, and Human Health." *Annual Review of Public Health*. Vol. 29.

illnesses becomes limited, and patients are often required to use stronger antibiotics with more frequent and longer rounds of use¹¹.

The production and consumption of animal products, especially meat, requires a far greater amount of resources than does the production of plant-based foods. In his 2001 book *The Food Revolution: How Your Diet Can Help Save Your Life and Our World*, John Robbins outlines the energy, water, and land resources that are used disproportionately in livestock agriculture. Because animal products require such a vast amount of resources to produce, their environmental impact is significantly negative. The main facet of livestock's unsustainability is the fact that animals consume more than they produce; in terms of food, meat is ultimately a negative output because calorie for calorie, an animal will be slaughtered into less food than was necessary to raise it. Cattle are some of the highest calorie-sinks, consuming sixteen times more energy in the form of grain than they produce in beef¹².

Not only does meat require intensive caloric input, it requires huge amounts of water, which is required to grow the foods consumed by livestock, to water the animals themselves, and to process animal carcasses. Robbins compares water input of meat to the water input of commonly consumed vegetables per pound of food. Beef is again the most intensive, requiring over 5,000 gallons of water per pound. Putting that into perspective, the average American's annual water usage for showers is around the same amount. Pork clocks in around 1,600 gallons, and a pound of chicken takes just over 800 gallons of water to produce. Conversely, a pound of apples requires fewer than 50 gallons of water. Wheat and potatoes each need 25 and 24 gallons

¹¹ FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine. (2012). "Guidance for Industry #209: The Judicious Use of Medically Important Antimicrobial Drugs in Food-Producing Animals."

¹² Robbins, J. (2001). *The food revolution: How your diet can help save your life and our world* (pp. 293). Berkeley, CA: Conari Press.

per pound, respectively. Even water-intensive crops such as legumes require fewer gallons than even chicken; the protein-packed chickpea requires 500 gallons per pound¹³.

The largest body of fresh water on the planet is the Ogallala Aquifer, which stretches underneath Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Colorado, South Dakota, Texas, and New Mexico. The Ogallala is a fossil aquifer; it is not fed by a river, rainfall, or other water source; rather, its water is left over from the last Ice Age's glacial melt. Because the aquifer is not replenished, it could disappear if it becomes depleted enough. 13 trillion gallons of water are drained from the Ogallala annually, the majority of which is used in livestock agriculture. The aquifer is also the main source of drinking water for the states above it. If depletion continues at current rates, those parts of the United States could quickly become water-insecure¹⁴.

As previously mentioned, livestock consume more food than they produce, calorie for calorie. All the food needed by livestock requires arable land to be grown; in all, the cattle, pigs, and chickens raised for meat consume 70% of all grain produced worldwide. Robbins illustrates this seemingly illogical phenomenon by outlining how many human's annual caloric needs could be satisfied by producing a given food on 2.5 acres of land. 2.5 acres of beef production could support one person; chicken could support two. However, 15 people could get sufficient calories from 2.5 acres of wheat, 19 by potatoes, and 23 by cabbage. Certainly none of these foods alone would provide sufficient nutrition, but the amount of land that is effectively wasted by industrial meat production is starkly clear with this comparison¹⁵.

2. Grown myself or grown locally

¹³ Robbins, J. (2001). *The food revolution: How your diet can help save your life and our world* (pp. 238-239). Berkeley, CA: Conari Press.

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Robbins, J. (2001). *The food revolution: How your diet can help save your life and our world* (pp. 294). Berkeley, CA: Conari Press.

Locally-based small-scale agriculture and home gardening are sustainable food-producing systems: when correctly operated and maintained, local food systems strengthen economies, improve the health of the environment, and empower people. Because of this, it is an ethical decision to support local agriculture.

Local food is economically ethical. Unlike profits generated by large-scale, industrial agriculture, which is often widely distributed among a variety of corporations, the revenue generated by small farms is more likely to stay within the local community. It is more likely to be used to improve housing, fund education, provide health services, improve public transportation and other rural infrastructure, and improve business and recreational opportunities within the area.

In both rural and urban areas where small, locally-based farms are a part of the landscape, studies have shown that there are more businesses, schools, and churches; higher-quality infrastructure such as roads and sidewalks; and more beneficial community resources such as public parks and newspapers than in similar areas without local agriculture or business. Furthermore, these communities boast higher rates of employment; this is attributed to lower levels of overall mechanization in small-scale agriculture and production which allow for an increase in human-labor jobs, as well as the increase in jobs that occurs when local stores, schools, and public service providers thrive¹⁶.

On a global scale, locally-based agriculture is the single largest employer and the largest source of income in the world, providing livelihoods for 40 percent of the world's population. This is especially prevalent in poor or rural populations, where small-scale or subsistence

¹⁶ Logsdon, G. (2011). Small Farms Create More Jobs. In *The Contrary Farmer*. Post Mills, Vermont: Chelsea Green Pub.

farming serves to effectively feed local populations. Mass production and industrialization often negatively impact these vulnerable populations, causing food prices to rise dramatically and forcing small landowners and farmers off their property and out of their agriculturally-based livelihood¹⁷.

Local food is environmentally ethical. Consuming local food is one of the easiest ways to improve the health of the earth. Small-scale agriculture is an environmental asset due to its tendency to preserve biodiversity, reduce land degradation, and conserve forested areas. A 2013 U.N. report states that modern industrial agricultural practices have laid waste to land, fuel, and water resources and has reduced biodiversity. It is estimated that 35 percent of the world's severely degraded land has reached its damaged state as a direct result of industrial agriculture. The use of nonnative or genetically modified crops, the use of petrochemical-based fertilizers and pesticides, practices such as monoculture planting and slash-and-burn farming, and the use of fossil fuels to transport goods long distances are all facets of the industrial food system that contribute to the destruction of the environment. Conversely, local agriculture works within a local environment and preserves it; this method of food production is uniquely suited to the community for which it provides and is generally a small-scale closed-loop system. This means that all inputs are cycled efficiently through the system and little is wasted; crops are suited to grow with little in the way of artificial pesticides and fertilizers, and the land is able to support the crops without being degraded or destroyed. In such a system, pollutants are minimized and landscapes are left more or less intact, still able to support native biodiversity¹⁸.

¹⁷ Hoffman, U. (Ed.). (2013). *Wake Up Before It Is Too Late: Make Agriculture Truly Sustainable Now for Food Security in a Changing Climate*. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: Trade and Environment Review 2013.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

The environmental effects of long-distance transportation are a compelling reason to choose local goods. The current industrial agricultural system relies heavily on fossil fuels to carry foodstuffs across nations and around the world. The distance a food product travels is measured in “food miles,” which calculates the distance from a food’s place of harvest to its place of consumption. This distance includes intermediary steps such as travel to processing and packing locations; for example, the average gallon of milk in an American supermarket requires homogenization, pasteurization, and packaging before it can be consumed, and those additional steps increase the food miles traveled by the product¹⁹. When food miles increase for a food (or other consumable good), the fossil fuel needed to transport the item increases. This leads to an increase in greenhouse gas emissions associated with the transportation of the food, which are known to contribute to atmospheric warming and global climate change. Choosing locally produced goods allows a consumer to reduce the food miles and therefore the levels of negative ecological impact associated with their food²⁰.

Local food is socially ethical. Economic revenue is not the only benefit fed into communities where small-scale and local production and consumption is practiced; small farms are also a valuable source of healthy food that can be accessed by a surprisingly wide scale of people. It is a common misperception that small-scale farms are inefficient and do not produce enough food to feed a significant population; in reality, local small-scale farms around the world tend to produce more food with more nutritional value than large-scale agricultural systems. Per unit of area, small farms are generally 200 percent more productive than their industrial

¹⁹ Pirog, R., & Benjamin, A. (2005). Calculating food miles for a multiple ingredient food product. Ames, Iowa: Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University.

²⁰ Pirog, R., Van Pelt, T., Enshayan, K., & Cook, E. (2011). Food, Fuel, and Freeways: An Iowa perspective on how far food travels, fuel usage, and greenhouse gas emissions. Ames, Iowa: Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University.

counterparts. In some cases, they can even be as much as 1000 percent more productive; this is due to a greater diversification of crops and livestock and more detailed attention being devoted to the farm. Furthermore, it is more practical to practice petrochemical-free agriculture on a local scale than on an industrial scale. This heightened productivity and lower levels of petrochemical use allow members of these communities to have lowered rates of diet-related diseases and higher levels of food security²¹.

The World Health Organization defines food security as a state “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life.” Food security includes factors such as food availability, in which the quantity of food is sufficient for a given population and consistently available; food access, in which a given population has resources sufficient to allow them to acquire enough nutritious food in order to support a healthy diet; and food use, in which a population has basic knowledge of nutrition and adequate sanitation to allow food to be utilized in a manner that promotes a healthy lifestyle²².

The United States Department of Agriculture designates levels of food availability and access as being within the range of either food security or food insecurity; these ranges are then further broken down into more specific categories. In the range of food security, “high food security” designates that a community has “no reported indications of food-access problems or limitations. “Marginal food security” signifies that an area has only a few instances of “anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house” and shows “little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake.” First in the category of food insecurity is “low food security”, which indicates several “reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet” but displays

²¹ Rosset, P. M. (1999). *The Multiple Functions and Benefits of Small Farm Agriculture Policy Brief Number Four*. Oakland, CA: Food First: The Institute for Food Development and Policy.

²² World Health Organization (2013). *Food Security. Trade, Foreign Policy, Diplomacy, and Health*.

“little or no indication of reduced food intake.” Second in this category is “very low food security”, which indicates many instances of “disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake” within a community²³.

In 2012, the USDA found that nearly 15 percent of households in the United States (approximately 18 million total) were considered food insecure. 5.7 percent, or 6.8 million households, met the criteria for experiencing very low food security. This data translates to over 50 million Americans living in conditions where a sufficient quantity of adequately nutritious food is not available; 16.7 million of these citizens are children. Globally, this number becomes even more drastic: 805 million people around the world were chronically undernourished in 2014²⁴.

Many industrial agriculturalists claim that their methods of growing crops helps feed the world. While this is sometimes true, the fact remains that the two largest crops grown in the U.S. are corn and soy, and, in many cases, these are not used to directly feed humans. Even when these crops do make it to the plates of hungry people around the world, they offer little more than empty calories, lacking the nutrients, vitamins, and minerals needed to support a healthy diet. Furthermore, when food insecure nations import these crops from the U.S., native farmers are discouraged from growing their own crops. This not only decreases the welfare of these farmers and of the nation’s local economies, but also decreases overall food security²⁵.

The United Nations have released several reports calling for an increased consumption of locally-produced food around the world in order to alleviate the problem of food insecurity.

²³ Coleman-Jensen, A., Nord, M. & Singh, A. Household Food Security in the United States in 2012, ERR-155, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ International Forum on Globalization. (2013). Nine Myths About Industrial Agriculture and Hunger.

According to the most recent report, issued in 2013, local food has the potential to feed the world by promoting strong local economies and self-sufficiency, and by maximizing yield through the utilization of traditional crops and growing methods uniquely suited for the local area. Local small-scale agriculture is also less energy intensive than industrial production; this makes it an ideal method of food production for the 1.3 billion people worldwide who are considered “energy impoverished” and lack access to electricity and other fossil-based power sources²⁶.

In addition to improving community food security and health, local agriculture and local production also increases the overall quality of goods and services available in a community, as well as levels of community pride and civic participation. A 2007 study of urban communities involved with local agriculture and gardening found that these communities enjoyed decreased rates of teenage pregnancy, suicide, unemployment, and crime. They also saw increase in reported levels of physical activity and environmental awareness²⁷.

Around the world, local farming and goods production is socially empowering. It allows farmers and artisans to have more control over their goods and strengthens their business and entrepreneurship skills, especially among women and marginalized peoples. Communication between producers and consumers is increased, allowing consumers to have more of a say in where and how their food is produced. Small-scale farmers are more easily able to sell their wares directly to their consumers, to local restaurants, and to charities, which allows for a more tightly knit community dynamic²⁸.

²⁶ Hoffman, U. (Ed.). (2013). *Wake Up Before It Is Too Late: Make Agriculture Truly Sustainable Now for Food Security in a Changing Climate*. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: Trade and Environment Review 2013.

²⁷ Wakefield, S., Yeudall, F., Taron, C., Reynolds, J., & Skinner, A. (2007). Growing urban health: Community gardening in South-East Toronto. *Health Promotion International*, 22(2), 92-100. doi: 10.1093

²⁸ Oregon State Extension Faculty. (2015). *Small Farms Have Big Impact on Communities*. Oregon State University.

3. Fair Trade

Food that is produced according to the standards of fair trade is an ethical choice because it ensures that people and their environments will not be exploited for the benefit of consumers.

Fair trade goods are produced in a way that guarantees a fair price and fair labor conditions. A fair price covers the cost of production and the amount of money needed to provide workers with a living wage. A living wage is defined as enough payment to allow a person to acquire adequate food, shelter, clothing, education, and healthcare for themselves and any dependents in the place they live. Fair labor entails that all workers will be given safe, sanitary working conditions and enforces strict labor laws in order to ensure that workers are treated fairly and are of legal working age.

Fair trade mandates that foods are traded in the most direct manner possible. Direct trade eliminates unnecessary middlemen in the trade process; generally, fair trade goods go from the producer to a co-op to a distributor to a store before ultimately reaching the consumer. Your average non-fair trade product is going to go from the producer through all sorts of buyers, processors, exporters, brokers, corporations, and distributors before reaching a consumer. This form of trade allows producers to be more involved with the trade process, giving them more say in what happens to their product and allowing for better business opportunities and the development of greater business skills. It also reduces the food miles and therefore the ecological footprint associated with the good.

Fair trade provides ample opportunities for socio-economic development. As mentioned, fair trade offers producers better wages and business skills. This in turn allows farmers and artisans to reinvest the money they make back into their families and their community. Children

can go to school, jobs are created, and community services and infrastructure such as hospitals, roads, and businesses are generated. Fair trade also grants marginalized groups greater social and economic mobility and autonomy. Often, fair trade groups will focus on buying goods from women, impoverished farmers, and ethnic or religious minorities who may not have much power in their society. With the support of fair trade buyers, these marginalized people can make livings for themselves and gain more of a voice within their families and their communities.

Fair trade producers must adhere to a certain set of environmental standards; these include requirements to protect and manage their land and resources; restrict the use of petroleum-based pesticides and fertilizers; and ban the use of genetically engineered crops. These stipulations ensure that the farms operated by fair trade producers are more sustainable and are a beneficial component to a healthy ecosystem²⁹.

4. Scavenged

Over 1/3 of all food produced around the world goes to waste. In the United States alone, we throw out nearly 40 percent of our food. Because of this, and because the industrial food system is ecologically and humanitarianly problematic, it is an ethical choice to not use my consumer dollar to buy industrially produced food and to instead salvage foods that have been thrown away.

In 2011, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization released a report stating that approximately one third of all food produced in the world is wasted³⁰. The National Resource Defense Council found in 2013 that about 40% of the United States' food is thrown away

²⁹ Fairtrade International. (2011). Our Standards. Fair Trade Standards

³⁰ Gustavsson, J., Cederberg, C., & Sonesson, U. (2011). Global Food Losses and Food Waste: Extent, Causes, and Prevention. Swedish Institute for Food and Biotechnology Save Food! Campaign. Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations.

uneaten. These numbers include both pre-and post-consumer waste statistics; pre-consumer waste often takes the form of foodstuffs that are rejected by harvesters, packagers, and distributors as a result of cosmetic deficiencies or improper storage and subsequent spoilage. Post-consumer waste is often a result of buyers storing goods improperly, again resulting in spoilage, restaurant diners receiving too-large portion sizes, and consumers disposing of goods that are ostensibly past their sell-by date but are still fine to eat³¹.

When food is wasted, resources are wasted; a 2013 report by the FAO found that the world throws away \$750 billion on wasted food every year, and that 28% of the earth's arable land is used to grow wasted food. Human resources are wasted as well; if none of the world's food was thrown away, each person on earth would have 2831 calories to eat every single day. As it stands, the FAO estimates that around one in eight people (842 million total) suffer from chronic hunger³².

Not only are resources wasted, but shared resources such as the atmosphere are damaged. As food waste rots, it releases carbon dioxide; if it goes to a landfill, it decomposes anaerobically, which means it breaks down without the presence of oxygen. This results in the release of methane, a greenhouse gas that is 25 times more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide; the release of this CO₂ and methane accelerates climate change. In fact, the same FAO study published in 2013 determined that food waste, as an entity, is the third-largest producer of greenhouse gas in the world, releasing roughly 3.3 billion tons annually. Only the countries of

³¹ Gunders, D. (2013). Wasted: How America is losing up to 40 percent of its food from fork to landfill. National Resource Defense Council.

³² FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2013). Food waste harms Climate, water, land and biodiversity. New FAO Report.

the United States and China, which each emit about 7 billion tons a year, have higher rates of greenhouse gas emissions³³.

The corruption within the industrial food system, the systematic mistreatment of agricultural workers, and my desire to avoid supporting such a system is another reason why I dumpster dive. Agricultural work is physically demanding, requires long hours of work, and pays minimally. Most members of the United States' workforce who were born and raised in the U.S. are unwilling to do such work. For that reason, a 2013 report by the Southern Poverty Law Center estimates that roughly 80% of the agricultural workforce is made up of migrant workers—nearly 3 million people. Of these workers, over half are undocumented³⁴. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (as outlined by the United Nations Human Rights Committee) requires that migrant workers and families be free from discrimination, have equality before the law regardless of legal status, have access to basic needs, be immune to arbitrary deportation, and remain protected from violence or the threat thereof. However, the United States has not yet ratified this agreement, and as such migrant workers are often abused. In addition to the backbreaking work and low pay they must endure, workers are often denied basic rights such as adequate shelter, sanitation, electricity, transportation, and medical care. Furthermore, workers may be unprotected from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse³⁵.

Women are especially vulnerable to rape and other forms of sexual assault while working in the United States as migrant agricultural laborers. A 2010 study conducted by Irma Morales Waugh and outlined in a report by Bauer and Ramirez in a Southern Poverty Law Center report

³³ *ibid.*

³⁴ Southern Poverty Law Center. (2013). *Close to Slavery: Guestworker Programs in the United States*.

³⁵ Bhatnagar, C. (2009, December 18). *Human Rights Abuse in Plain Sight: Migrant Workers in the U.S.* American Civil Liberties Union.

published in the same year found that at least 80% of female migrant agricultural workers had suffered some form of sexual harassment or assault while working in the United States; the authors of the report determined in personal interviews that “nearly all” women who responded to their surveys had endured at least one incident of sexual harassment³⁶.

In 2011, the Southern Poverty Law Center released a report detailing the near-slavery-like conditions endured by migrant guestworkers providing labor services through the United States’ Department of Labor H-2 program. Though the DOL only employs around 50,000 migrant guestworkers, the SPLC shows that this data is indicative of the struggles of all 3 million migrant workers operating in the United States. Because these workers have few legal rights while laboring in the United States, they are extremely vulnerable to greedy employers and corporations. Rather than being seen as valuable workers, these people are instead treated as disposable labor imports³⁷.

Agricultural and food service workers (such as processors or packers) are regularly cheated out of their wages and subjected to debt servitude (often by having to purchase their own uniforms, tools, and other necessary job-related equipment or by having to pay exorbitantly high rent to employer-owned apartments), are held virtually captive by employers or third-party labor brokers who seize and hold their identifying documents, are subject to hazardous working conditions and then denied medical benefits or worker’s compensation for on-the-job injuries, and are vulnerable to human traffickers. Workers who miss days of work due to illness, on-the-job injuries, family responsibilities, or a lack of transportation; or who cannot work non-optional “overtime” hours, are threatened with the loss of their job. Often, workers who complain about

³⁶ Bauer, M., & Ramirez, M. (2010, November 1). *Injustice on Our Plates: Immigrant Women in the U.S. Food Industry*. Southern Poverty Law Center.

³⁷ Southern Poverty Law Center. (2013). *Close to Slavery: Guestworker Programs in the United States*.

their work conditions or pay are deported and blacklisted, prevented from ever working in the United States again³⁸.

³⁸ *ibid.*

APPENDIX B: *Daily Blog Journaling Entries*

Emily's blog detailing her three-month thesis experiment can be accessed at

<https://ethicalconsumerthesis.wordpress.com/>

DECEMBER 31 JOURNAL

Tomorrow, New Year's Day 2015, will mark the beginning of my Honors Thesis Project. You can read about what this project entails on my about page in more detail, but here is some basic information to get us started; titled "The Ethical Consumer," this project will be a three-month journey requiring that I only consume goods that are produced in a socially and environmentally just manner. In short, this means that I will only be eating foods that are vegetarian, local, homegrown, fair trade, and/or scavenged (a nice term for dumpster-diving). To the best of my abilities, I will only be using material goods that are used, fair trade, and/or locally handmade.

I anticipate certain concessions will have to be made throughout this process; for example, my school semester doesn't start until the 5th of January and I will be staying with family until then. During times like this where I am travelling, it won't always be possible to find foods that apply exactly to my guidelines. Similarly, throughout these three months I imagine it will be difficult to find material goods such as toilet paper or cat food that will adhere perfectly to these standards. In cases such as these, I will do everything within my power to stick to my standards as much as possible and will write about the limitations I have encountered.

I have some practice living the life of an ethical consumer; as a Sustainability major, I've spent most of my college career learning about the affects us, as humans, have on our environment and on one another. I've been a vegetarian for four years, began dumpster diving three years ago, and have been active with the local food and fair trade movements for two years.



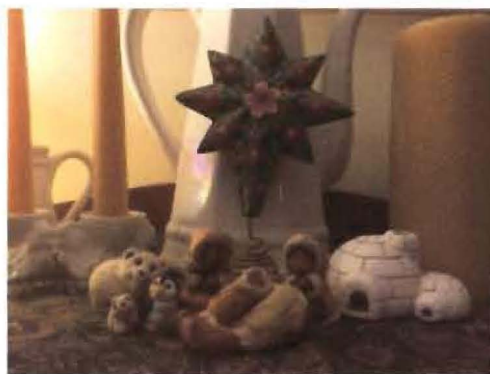
Volunteering at Muncie's Living Lightly Fair, a sustainable living event, in September of 2013; this group helped lead a composting workshop with Growing Power CEO Will Allen.



Dumpster-dived bell peppers and Roma tomatoes, persimmons scavenged from a tree on-campus, and cherry tomatoes grown in a community garden.



A fridge full of locally-grown produce from the Muncie farmers market, summer 2014.



A fair-trade Nativity set for Christmas.

JANUARY 3RD JOURNAL

This is the third day of my thesis project, and the first day that I have been able to (almost) fully commit to it. I've been away from home and visiting relatives until today, so not having total control over what I eat has made the beginning of my Ethical Consumer adventure a little rocky.

I did what I could though; for example, I made sure that I only drank tea and coffee that were from Equal Exchange. This Fair Trade company describes itself as “a for-profit Fairtrade worker-owned, cooperative headquartered in West Bridgewater, Massachusetts. Equal Exchange distributes organic, gourmet coffee, tea, sugar, bananas, avocados, cocoa, and chocolate bars produced by farmer cooperatives in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Founded in 1986, it is the oldest and largest Fair Trade coffee company in the United States. The highest paid employee of Equal Exchange may not make more than four times what the lowest paid employee receives.”

For those of you who may be unfamiliar with what fair trade is or why it is important, you can read about it [here](#).

Today was my first day back in the comfort of my home, so I was able to consume mostly on my own terms (breakfast was at the in-laws', where we had English muffins and vegetarian “sausage” patties). Having been away, the larder was a bit bare, so I unfortunately did not eat very healthily today. I'll have to go dumpster diving in a couple days to stock up on some fruits and vegetables (hopefully). As it stood, today I ate oven-baked fries (the kind that come frozen in a bag) that I rescued from a dumpster behind a grocery store. I topped those with some marinara sauce that my husband snagged, along with some other left-overs that were on their way to the trash can, after a University event a couple weeks ago. I also ate a slice of cheese-and-red onion pizza that was going to be tossed after an event at the church where I work. To drink, I have had several cups of Equal Exchange chamomile and Chai tea. At \$4.50 for 28 tea bags, the teas were the most expensive thing I've consumed today, since everything else was free.

In summary for today, I don't feel super great as a result of the unhealthy foods I've had to eat, but I've definitely saved some money by eating salvaged meals. I've also reduced the amount of food waste that ends up in our landfills and have supported fair-trade tea-growers – if minutely, from just one day of eating and drinking.

Grocers tend to throw out a pretty large amount of fresh produce, so I'm not too worried about getting enough healthy foods to eat in the upcoming week. I will go into more detail regarding the intricacies of dumpster diving, why I do it, and why it isn't as gross as it sounds within the next few days.

JANUARY 5 JOURNAL

Today was the official first day of the semester, though I don't have class until tomorrow.

This morning for breakfast I had some toast made from dumpster-dived 12-grain bread- this was quite the find, since I usually just find white bread. I also had peppermint tea from mint that I grew and dried over the summer.

Lunch was sliced apples from the Muncie farmer's market and lentil stew made from fair-trade lentils and farmer's market kale, onion, and garlic- as well as more tea, this time fair-trade Chai.

This is all markedly more healthy than the stuff I had been eating for the past few days- at one point yesterday I ate the extremely questionable dish “bowl-o’-croutons-and-Alfredo-sauce” *twice*, because we had a surplus of dumpster-dived croutons, a gallon-sized bag of sauce that was rescued from a trashcan after a University event my husband attended, and little else.

Luckily, today was a dumpster diving day, so I was able to land some healthier options. To read about my reasons for dumpster diving, how I do it, and why it isn’t as gross as it sounds, you can go [here](#).

This evening, my husband and I went to a few local grocery stores that toss out produce, canned and boxed goods, eggs, and drinks every single day. More often than not, the majority of this food is perfectly fine to eat. The stores’ trash gets emptied daily, so we know that the food hasn’t been there for more than a few hours. Generally we find things like bags of fruit or vegetables with only one or two spoiled pieces, cartons of eggs where a couple are cracked, boxes that have been dented, cans that have torn labels. These goods aren’t attractive to customers, so out they go. We also find food that is legitimately past its sell-by date, but as my dumpster-diving info page explains, most foods are still perfectly safe to eat up to two weeks beyond the date on their package.

Our haul was a little smaller than usual, and the weather while we were diving can only be described as *stupid* cold. However, I still got some good stuff! A loaf of garlic bread with slightly torn packaging, a green bell pepper, a cucumber, a dozen eggs, probably 20 limes, three pounds of bagged collard greens, a bag of grapes with a broken zipper, and two cans of biscuit dough that had come in a four-pack and were missing their mates. The stupid-cold weather did have the benefit of ensuring that there was no water collecting in the bottom of the bins, which is honestly the grossest part about dumpster-diving.

For dinner tonight, after getting home from diving, I made scrambled (dumpster) eggs with farmer’s market red onion and purple potatoes, and dumpster-sourced green pepper. The oil I coated the pan in was from that aforementioned University event that my husband rescued a bunch of food from, and even the salt I used was from an earlier dumpster-diving trip (the container was missing its label).



JANUARY 13 JOURNAL

Since the last journal entry, I've almost run out of the food I still had left over in my house from before starting the project- I considered these goods fair game since I certainly didn't want them to go to waste, and it definitely made the transition into my ethical consumer diet easier.

However, now that I've eaten through nearly everything except my fair trade goods and the things I gathered on my last few dumpster diving trips, I have found that my dietary choices are getting pretty limited.

Over the past week, many of my meals have been some combination of dumpster-dived spaghetti, collard greens, eggs, toast, and these weird chocolate-pretzel snack bars, as well as farmer's market onions, potatoes, garlic, and honey. Not too bad in terms of nutrition- I'm definitely getting my recommended 2.5 cups of vegetables a day, since three pound of chopped collard greens is a *lot* of leaves to go through. And I know I won't die of scurvy, since my last diving trip found me with about 2 dozen limes on my hands.

I also got my hands on locally brewed beer, crafted about 60 miles from me in Indianapolis. Flat 12 Bierwerks is a relatively small brewery that was founded in 2010 and began distributing its product to retailers outside of Indiana in 2012. Currently they only distribute to Indiana, areas of Tennessee, Central Illinois, Cincinnati, and Louisville. Because their small scale and limited distribution footprint makes their ecological footprint relatively minimal, and because the brewery supports various cultural, medical, and antipoverty charities through sponsorship and donations, I decided that Flat 12 products fit in with my ethical consumer lifestyle.

Today's menu:

Breakfast was a packet of instant oatmeal with sliced grapes- all from the dumpster, and Egyptian Mint tea from Zhena's Gypsy Teas, which is a women-run, fair-trade, organic tea producer.

Lunch was mashed potatoes (mixture of farmer's market and dumpster-sourced) made with farmer's market garlic and salvaged olive oil. I also had a couple dumpster-dived snack bars and a farmer's market apple.

For dinner I had more mashed potatoes and a big salad of collard greens with salvaged croutons and a bit of olive oil. Also a single lonely Milano sandwich cookie that was left over from Christmas that I found hiding in a cabinet. Throughout the day I have also been drinking water with cucumber and lime- dumpster-dived, of course.

I'm pretty sure I'll want a bit more to eat than collard greens by the end of this week, so keep your eyes out for more information on why I dumpster dive as well as more stories of my diving adventures as they happen.

JANUARY 14 JOURNAL

Today's menu:

- Breakfast was dumpster-dived oatmeal with chopped apple from the farmer's market, as well as some water with dumpster-dived cuke and lime.
- Lunch was a big collard green salad (almost through my second pound-sized bag) with croutons and olive oil- same as yesterday. I had off-brand dumpster-dived cocoa/peanut butter puff cereal for a snack- a few weeks ago we found a whole unopened bag that had lost its box and was therefore unsalable. This was super exciting, since awful-for-you sugary kids' breakfast cereal is one of my greatest guilty pleasures. I would hate to spend money on it and use my consumer dollar to support an industry that markets unhealthy food directly to children, but if it's being disposed of and free for the taking... anyway, it was delicious.
- For a late dinner I had a box of frozen macaroni-and-cheese- not super healthy, so I'll probably have a small collard salad in a minute here to compensate for it.
- Throughout the day I have also been drinking Equal Exchange chai tea- Readers have probably been able to infer this by now, but I am something of a tea addict. I drink at least three or four quart-sized jars of it every day. I'm glad that tea is one product that is relatively easy to find fair-trade, and that it actually isn't much more expensive than any other decent tea on the market.

One challenge I know I will be running into within the next few days is the issue of personal care products- specifically lip balm (another thing I'm kind of addicted to), toothpaste, and deodorant. The stars have aligned in such a way that I am running out of all three of these products simultaneously. I'm starting to explore my options:

One of my favorite lip balms is made by a company called Hurraw!; this balm totes ingredients that are organic, vegan, raw, fair trade, and not tested on animals. Plus, it comes in awesome flavors like grapefruit, earl grey tea, chai latte, and almond-cardamom-rosebud, and the balms come shipped in little bags that can double as loose-leaf tea infusers (which is great since I have a bunch of peppermint tea that I grew this summer). When I run out the tubes I got two birthdays ago (which will happen any day now) I will probably order some more from this company.

Toothpaste is a little harder- some quick internet searches led me to Lush Cosmetics, which prides itself in producing ethical beauty and hygiene products. Lush makes a fair-trade toothpaste substitute called "Toothy Tabs;" basically, these are little pellets of baking soda, cream of tartar, flavoring, and other tooth-clean ingredients that you crunch up in your teeth before brushing. This seemed like a good option until I realized that with shipping, 40 of these tablets would cost almost \$11.00. Brushing three times a day, that's less than two weeks' worth of tooth-cleaning.

Another option that I heard about from my sister-in-law is making my own tooth powder- this seems like a more viable choice. The only things needed for homemade tooth-brushing powder is baking soda and salt, which I already have quite a lot of. I even have salt that I got from dumpster-diving (mentioned [here](#)); I have yet to discover if there is even such a thing as fair-trade or ethically-sourced baking soda, or if a certain brand is a better choice than another. This is probably the option I will go with. My tooth-cleaning experience probably won't taste quite as nice as with the Lush products, but it's hard to beat economically. Plus, I won't have a lot of excess packaging to deal with.

The deodorant issue is probably the most complicated thing to figure out; finding preexisting deodorants that have ethically sourced ingredients can be tricky. I did find a salt-crystal deodorant bar [here](#) that claims to be made out of "100% fair trade Himalayan Salts." With shipping, this bar would be about \$11.50 and it looks like it would last a pretty long time- about as long as your average stick of deodorant.

I've also toyed with the idea of making my own deodorant. The most basic recipes I've found call for only four ingredients: coconut oil, arrowroot powder or corn starch, baking soda, and essential-oil-of-choice. Ethically-sourced coconut oil isn't hard to find; Dr. Brunner's sells 14-ounce jars of fair-trade oil online and at some local health food stores in Muncie. Goodness knows I have enough baking soda on my hands; I use it for everything from hair-washing to kitchen-cleaning so I have two five-pound boxes sitting in my pantry right now. Fair-trade cornstarch is available at Muncie's local [Downtown Farm Stand](#), and fair-trade tea-tree oil (which is what I would use, due to its antibacterial properties) is available online and at a Sephora in Fort Wayne, where I happen to be going this Friday for a concert.

Buying all those ingredients would be more of an initial cost than just getting the \$11 bar of salt, but I think I could get more batches of deodorant by making my own, and I feel like my homemade recipe might work better than mineral salts. I'll think about it and post updates when I decide what to do.

Overall, my observations from this point in my project are that my lifestyle is a whole lot less convenient now- I can't just walk into any store to buy whatever food I happen to be craving; I have to go out into the cold and hop into trash bins to find many of my meals; I can't run to Walgreens for toiletries when my toothpaste and deodorant run out and have to figure out how to make my own or scour several stores and online venues to find ethical choices- but this is actually a lot more fun! Getting food is an adventure, and there's something fulfilling about thinking and working hard to make sure what I'm consuming is ethical and sustainable.

JANUARY 15 JOURNAL

Today's menu/consumer log:

- For breakfast I had a dumpster-dived chocolate/pretzel granola bar and a big quart jar of Equal Exchange chai. I woke up a bit later than usual and was in a rush to catch the bus to campus, so I had to just eat something small and portable.
- For lunch I had a bag of dumpster-dived microwave kettle corn and a farmer's market apple, as well as another jar of chai.
- Dinner was dumpster-dived collard greens with a little olive oil and dumpster-dived potato wedges- also with olive oil.

Today I also purchased three tubes of Hurraw! chapstick online, since I'm pretty much out and it will take a few days for the package to ship. I got grapefruit, licorice, and green tea. It's kind of unreasonable how excited I am about this.



Grapefruit \$3.79



Green Tea \$3.79

But who wouldn't be excited to get lip balm this nifty in the mail?

As evidenced by my relatively junky diet today, I need to go on another dumpster-diving trip within the next couple days. Luckily the temperatures for the rest of the week are supposed to be in the double digits, so the nighttime weather shouldn't be too intolerable.

I'm still working on my "about" post for scavenging/dumpster diving, so keep your eyes out over the next few days for more information on why I'm choosing to reject the current industrial food/goods system through my consumer habits.

JANUARY 17 JOURNAL

During the winter, the farmer's market here is only held on the third Saturday of the month. That day was today, so I was able to stock up on some awesome locally grown onions and garlic.



After hitting the market my husband and I went to the Downtown Farm Stand, where we were able to pick up some pasture-raised eggs from Pinehurst Farm (located about 13 miles from where we live), raw milk mozzarella from Traders (about 60 miles away) and supplies to make homemade deodorant: Dr. Bronner's Coconut Oil (fair trade, organic, and non-GM) and Rapunzel Corn Starch (also fair trade, organic, and non-GM). When I went to Fort Wayne yesterday to see a concert in which my little sister was singing, I also stopped by The Body Shop to pick up their fair trade tea tree oil, which “comes from The Kenya Organic Oil Farmers’ Association (KOOFA), a co-operative of over 550 small-scale organic farmers around Mount Kenya National Park.”



With the great food I got today, I was able to make an awesome ethical consumer quiche, which I had for breakfast and lunch along with fair trade Egyptian mint tea. I found the original recipe [here](#), and adapted it to use the ingredients I had on hand:

- 1 1/2 dumpster-dived baking potatoes
- 8 eggs from Pinehurst Farm
- 16 ounces dumpster-dived collard greens (that’s the last of them!)
- 4 ounces mozzarella from Traders Point
- 2 red onions from the farmers market

I made the quiche crust by layering thin potato slices in a cast iron skillet, then I filled it with chopped greens, sautéed onions, and the egg and cheese before baking it at 375 degrees for 40 minutes.

I ended up deciding, as you may have inferred, to try my hand at making my own deodorant rather than buying the mineral salt crystal thing online. I got most of my ingredients for it from a locally run business, so I felt better about doing it this way rather than ordering something from someone halfway across the country.

For my deodorant, I used half a cup of baking soda, half a cup of corn starch, five tablespoons of coconut oil, and about 15 drops of tea tree oil. I mixed it all up, heated it for about 30 second in

the microwave, and poured it into an old, used-up deodorant stick applicator. Before popping it in the fridge to let it set. The recipe I used made enough to completely fill up one tube, as well as about half of another.



This evening I also worked at an event held by the church where I work as a music director- at the end of the evening there were three pizzas left over that no one wanted, so my husband decided we should take them home. I'd never be one to refuse to save a perfectly good pizza from the trash, so I had a slice of red potato-topped pizza for dinner, as well as a cup of fair trade chamomile tea and a Flat 12 amber ale.

JANUARY 26 JOURNAL

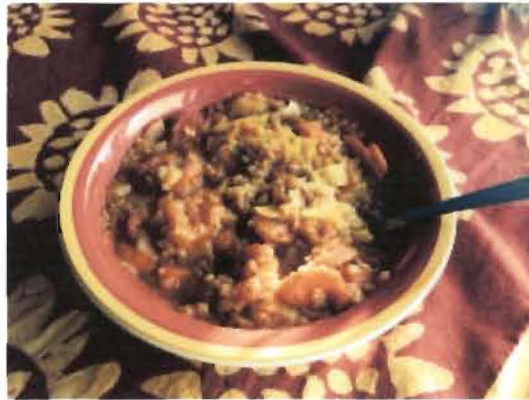
Earlier this past week, I went dumpster diving and got some really great stuff, including about 20 tomatoes, some onions, a plastic tub of lettuce, a box of glazed donuts, a bag of carrots, a green pepper, and two giant loaves of Italian sourdough bread. With these ingredients I was able to make some pretty awesome meals.



Dumpster-dived tomatoes, plus the last lime. And Dumpster-dived donuts!

Most of the tomatoes, plus one of the onions, a few cloves of the farmer's market garlic, and some of the dried basil from my garden this summer became soup that lasted for about five meals. I used the lettuce to make about eight medium-sized salads along with the last of my dumpster-dived cucumber and the seemingly-unending supply of croutons and olive oil.

The tomatoes I didn't use in the soup became part of a vegetable-quinoa curry that I made yesterday. Coming home from winter break a few weeks ago, my mother-in-law sent my husband and me off with a big tub of dried quinoa. I do love gifts of food. In addition to the quinoa and tomatoes, I also used dumpster-dived carrots and onions in this dish, as well as coriander seeds from my garden.



In non-food related news, I am loving my homemade deodorant (as much as anyone can love something like deodorant). Seriously, though- it legitimately works better than any natural deodorant I have ever tried. The coconut oil makes me smell fantastic and it works even through a workout. This is definitely an ethical choice that I will be maintaining even after the conclusion of my thesis project.

FEBRUARY 2 JOURNAL

I have completed my first month of my ethical consumer project! Overall I feel that it is going very well- it hasn't been hard to stick to my guidelines, and I don't think it has been that difficult to go without certain things I would normally enjoy- such as whatever kind of food I happen to want at the moment, or toothpaste from a corner store.

Speaking of toothpaste, I did end up running out of my spearmint Sensodyne about a week and a half ago- since then, I have been brushing with baking soda paste. My teeth feel just as clean as they normally do, and though it doesn't taste as nice the baking soda is pretty easy to get used to.

As far as things like soap and shampoo go, I still have quite a bit left over from before beginning the project- but happily, those things still fit in with my guidelines pretty well.

The soap I use is homemade- the New Year's Day before this past one, and the one before that, my in-laws and husband and I spent a day making a huge batch of vegetable-oil based soap. I'm

pretty sure I still have five or six bars left over from the start of 2013 alone, so I'm not worried about running out any time soon.

In lieu of shampoo and conditioner, I use baking soda and vinegar (which I buy in 5-pound boxes and 2-gallon jugs, respectively, so again- not too worried about running out). My hair is pretty short so I don't have to wash it too often or worry too much about its care. Right now, I wash it about 3 times in a week, generally after I work out. For washing, I keep an old glass peanut-butter jar in my shower filled with about $\frac{1}{3}$ baking soda and $\frac{2}{3}$ water. I splash some of this thin paste onto my scalp, and it gets rid of excess oil and dirt just as well as any commercial shampoo I've ever tried. Then, after rinsing out the baking soda I rinse my hair with a mixture that's about $\frac{1}{4}$ apple cider vinegar and $\frac{3}{4}$ water. This magically works as a conditioner (I think it has something to do with restoring the hair's pH or something?) and makes my hair super soft, but not greasy or heavy.

I've used this method of hair-washing for about 5 years now – it even worked when I worked long, hot, dirty hours outside as a kid's camp counselor a few summers ago, and when I had Manic Panic blue hair my sophomore year of college. It doesn't hurt that it's infinitely cheaper than using regular shampoo and conditioner, too.

So, details about my hygiene aside, here is what today's menu looked like:

- For breakfast I made two fried eggs from Pinehurst Farm with dumpster dived toast- I seasoned the eggs with farmer's market garlic, homegrown coriander, and some organic curry powder I had left over in my spice cabinet from before beginning this project.



- Lunch was dumpster-dived carrots roasted with farmer's market garlic, dumpster-dived clementine, farmer's market honey, fair trade coconut oil, and homegrown thyme. It was nice to get some vegetables and fruits in because for the past three or so days I've been eating a whoooole lot of mashed potatoes. For some reason, stores really like to throw out bags and bags of spuds.



- For dinner I had a can of black beans that I found hiding in my pantry from before the project started- I seasoned them with a little salt and coriander, as well as some garlic from the farmer's market and a little Trader's Point mozzarella.

After eating my husband and I decided to go out to a locally owned bar so he could get some good, fried pub food- I brought along a jar of Equal Exchange chai tea and ordered a Scottish-style ale from Three Floyds Brewery- located about three hours away in Munster, Indiana.

We just got back from dumpster diving, since I was running low on food that wasn't bread or potatoes. We definitely hit the veggie jackpot tonight! I bagged about 20 yellow bell peppers, four large heads of broccoli, two small cartons of raspberries, four bags of baby carrots, five packages of cilantro, two bags of onions, and some mushrooms. We also found a box of Pop Tarts, a bottle of French-vanilla coffee creamer that had lost its plastic cap but was still factory sealed, and a box of instant macaroni and cheese. Even though it is once again stupid-cold outside, our haul was worth it.

FEBRUARY 3 JOURNAL

Today's menu:

- This has been the second day in a row that I have had time to make myself a proper breakfast- not heated-up leftovers or a piece of toast or two as I run out the door for a change! This morning I scrambled one of Pinehurst Farm's eggs with half of a dumpster-dived yellow pepper and half a bulb of farmer's market elephant garlic. The next farmer's market isn't for another two weeks, but when the 21st rolls around I'm going to have to get there early enough to really stock up on local eggs and more garlic- especially the elephant garlic, because it peels super easily.
- For lunch I had some sliced dumpster-dived yellow pepper and my last farmer's market apple- on the off chance that the winter market still has apples in February, that will be another thing to stock up on. Even if they don't, apples are one thing that get thrown out

by stores fairly often, especially when they come in bags- one in the package will get bruised or a little mushy, and the whole bag has to go.

- For dinner this evening I made some brown rice I have left over from before starting the project and sautéed yellow and green bell peppers, onions, and tomato (all from the dumpster) as well as some farmer's market garlic. I topped it all with some of my dumpster-dived cilantro.



Brown rice, green and yellow bell pepper, onion, garlic, tomato, and cilantro- a 90% dumpster-dived meal.

I found a lot of cilantro last night, which was really exciting since fresh herbs wilt really quickly and are usually pretty far gone by the time they get thrown out. This, however, was mostly good! I brought five large bunches home (boxed up in plastic containers) and after sorting through it all to pick out the wilted or brown sprigs, I'd say I was left with the equivalent of about four bunches. As much as I would like to eat all of it right here and now, I know I'll regret that when my herb supplies are low again. So to keep my cilantro good for as long as possible, I made what I didn't use fresh for dinner into a pesto! Even with the 4-ish large bunches I had, and even with using the stems in addition to the cilantro leaves, it all reduced down pretty quickly in the food processor and almost all fits into a 16-ounce jar. I added a little olive oil, a clove of garlic, and some salt- it's absolutely delicious and wonderfully green (a welcome sight after last week's never-ending potatoes) so it will be a struggle to not eat all of it right away.



FEBRUARY 6 JOURNAL

Yesterday's menu:

- Breakfast was two sliced dumpster-dived yellow bell peppers, sautéed in olive oil and put on dumpster-dived toast.
- For a snack I had dumpster-dived popcorn and for lunch I had a dumpster-dived kale salad with peppers and croutons.
- For dinner I ate a box of dumpster-dived macaroni and cheese. Throughout the day, I drank fair trade chai and Earl Grey tea.

Today's menu:

- Breakfast was two pieces of dumpster-dived bread, toasted, with farmer's market honey.
- Lunch was my last Parkhurst Farms egg, scrambled with some dumpster-dived yellow bell pepper and onion and seasoned with homegrown thyme. Later in the day I had a snack of a dumpster-dived kale salad with chopped yellow pepper, croutons (yep, still have some of those) and olive oil. I also drank two large jars of fair trade chai tea with a touch of dumpster-dived French vanilla coffee creamer.
- For dinner, I made potato-broccoli-cheddar soup! It was delicious and I have enough to last me for several days' worth of meals.

I improvised the soup recipe more or less, but here is what I included:

- Two dumpster-dived yellow onions, sautéed
- 1/2 head farmer's market garlic, sautéed
- Two large dumpster-dived baking potatoes, boiled and mashed
- 16 ounces Trader's Point white cheddar cheese (purchased today at the Downtown Farm Stand for about \$5.50/8 oz.)
- 4 medium-sized heads of dumpster-dived broccoli, roasted with olive oil

I didn't have any broth or stock, but water with salt (that just happened to also be dumpster-dived) and some homegrown basil, rosemary, and thyme worked well.



FEBRUARY 8 JOURNAL

I mentioned a few posts ago that I wanted more apples but that I wasn't sure if the farmer's market would have them this late in the season- around that time I was also contemplating buying some Trader's Point yogurt, since I'm trying to get more fermented/healthy-bacteria food into my diet, but I can only buy so many Trader's Point goodies before my wallet starts to feel it. Yesterday, my food-prayers were answered! Amazingly enough, a guy who goes to the church where I work was gifted about three dozen bags of red delicious apples, and three dozen large cases of yogurt.

Unable to eat all that by himself, he's been giving some away to our church members, so I was able to take home a bag of apples and two quart-sized containers of yogurt! Though I didn't have to fish it out of a dumpster, I consider this second-hand food since the original recipient not only got it for free, but was giving it away for free in order to keep it from being wasted.

So, menus:

- Yesterday for breakfast I had two large pieces of toasted Italian sourdough, dumpster-dived several weeks ago and recently thawed out from our freezer. On one piece I had some of the dumpster-dived cilantro I made, and farmer's market honey on another.
- For lunch I had a kale and pepper salad with croutons and olive oil, as well as a dumpster-dived orange.

- Dinner was a bowl of broccoli-potato-cheddar soup. Throughout the day I had three bags of fair trade chai tea. Yesterday evening was the first Saturday of the month, which is when my husband and I play music for a church event, so we also got to take home some leftover pizza from that (as seems to be inevitable).

Today's breakfast was leftover onion and pepper pizza from yesterday- so healthy. I also had some fair-trade chai tea. For lunch I had some of the aforementioned yogurt as well as an orange, and for dinner I had more broccoli soup.

I just finished baking a batch of carrot-cake muffins, based on this recipe. I modified it to accommodate what I have in my kitchen, so here's what I ended up using:

- 1.5 cup flour (half whole-wheat that I already had, half all-purpose that was dumpster-dived)
- 1/2 cup Wholesome Sweetener's Fair Trade sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (dumpster-dived)
- 2 teaspoons baking powder (already had)
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon (already had)
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger (already had)
- pinch nutmeg (already had)
- 1/6 cup Dr. Bronner's Fair Trade Coconut Oil
- 1/6 cup dumpster-dived applesauce
- 1 tbsp. ground flax (already had) + 3 tbsp. water to make an egg substitute
- 2/3 cup yogurt (see above)
- 1.5 cups shredded carrots (dumpster-dived)

The main deviations from the original recipe were that I used a mixture of coconut oil and applesauce instead of olive oil and left out some of the sugar and the vanilla since I used sweetened vanilla yogurt rather than sour cream.

For people who don't eat eggs, the "flax egg" is a really great substitute for baking. Basically the ground flax, when mixed with water, congeals to the consistency of an egg white. 1 tablespoon flax and 3 tablespoons water is the equivalent of one egg. It's also great if you're trying to get more omega-3 fatty acids or fiber into your diet, since flax is full of that.

Anyway, the muffins turned out great- very carrotty and moist and not too sweet, plus it's great to know it's possible to bake with ethically sourced ingredients.



FEBRUARY 11 JOURNAL

Yesterday's menu:

Breakfast was a packet of dumpster-dived corn grits, two carrot muffins, and some fair trade earl-grey tea.

For lunch and dinner I made a stir-fry with the last of the brown rice I still had, and with dumpster-dived yellow peppers, dumpster-dived onions, dumpster-dived broccoli, and the rest of the shredded dumpster-dived carrots that I didn't use making muffins. I seasoned it with some soy-sauce and mustard packets that my husband didn't want after getting Chinese takeout for himself a few days ago. In between meals I had a small portion of my broccoli-potato-cheese soup.

I also made some vegan banana-oat muffins, modifying [this recipe](#). Here is what I used:

- 2 flax eggs (2 tbsp. flax + 6 tbsp. water)
- About 2 cups mashed banana (dumpster dived)
- 1/3 cup fair trade sugar
- 1/8 cup applesauce (dumpster dived)
- 1/8 cup fair trade coconut oil
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt (dumpster dived)
- 1.5 cups flour (dumpster dived)
- 1/2 cup rolled oats (dumpster dived)

Like the carrot muffins, these were delicious. I had a couple as a snack after eating dinner.

Today's menu:

For breakfast I had a large jar of fair trade chai tea with dumpster-dived French vanilla coffee creamer.

For lunch I had a banana muffin and I made some rice and vegetable curry. Now, about the rice I used: for Christmas TWO YEARS AGO my in-laws gifted my husband and I with a giant 25-pound sack of jasmine basmati rice- only today have I finally broken into it, having run out of our big container of brown rice. So I used that rice for my curry, as well as dumpster dived kale and carrots and farmer's market garlic. I seasoned it with homegrown coriander and leftover curry powder, and topped it all off with some of the cilantro pesto I made about a week ago.

I also had this curry for dinner, as well as one banana muffin and one carrot muffin. I also drank a jar of fair trade earl grey tea.

FEBRUARY 21 JOURNAL

Today's menu:

- This morning for breakfast I had a smoothie made from dumpster-dived frozen yogurt tubes (strawberry flavor) and dumpster-dived raspberries. I also had 1/2 of a dumpster-dived apple.
- For lunch I made scrambled eggs with eggs from the farmer's market, dumpster-dived potatoes, and onions and garlic from the farmer's market. Today was the third Saturday of the month, so my husband was able to go to the winter market for me and stock up on

about 4 dozen eggs, which is great since I have a feeling they'll need to be my main protein source for the next month.



- Dinner was basmati rice (already in my apartment before beginning the project), and fair-trade Earl Grey tea. Wholly nutritionally deficient, but I feel like my breakfast and lunch made up for it a little bit.

Lately I have been running into a couple road blocks with this project; over the past week and a half or so, my homework load has been really heavy and my internet access had been kind of shoddy. As such, I wasn't able to blog.

Retrospectively, my meals for the past 10 days have composed largely of the white basmati rice I mentioned [here](#), combined with various dumpster-dived vegetables such as peppers, kale, carrots, and cilantro pesto. I ran out of those vegetables about two days ago so I will have to go dumpster-diving soon. I've also been eating a fair amount of dumpster-dived bread and oatmeal, as well as the apples and yogurt I got from the guy who goes to my church.

Probably the most significant stumbling block I ran into happened yesterday, when I was invited out to eat not once, but twice. The first dinner outing was with my husband, a couple of mutual friends, and a professor at our college who has been promising to take us out for several months

now. She finally had time to schedule a dinner, and it seemed like it would have been a disservice to everyone if I had declined and suggested putting off our outing for another month. So I went- we ate at a little, local Indian restaurant here in Muncie, where I ordered black lentils and rice. The restaurant is a local small business, and the food was vegan, but I have no way of knowing if what I ate was ethically produced so this outing didn't fit within the confines of my ethical standards. Oops.

The second incident of the night was when my husband and I were invited to an after-party at Applebee's for the opening night of a theatre production we worked on. Again, it seemed bad form to decline, since my husband wanted to go to congratulate the cast, but not without me. This slip-up of sorts was even worse than the first, since it was at a chain restaurant. I didn't really eat there- I snacked on some appetizers (fried green beans and tortilla chips) that the table had ordered, and I myself ordered an Old Fashioned. Again, everything was vegetarian- and the bourbon in my drink was produced in Clermont, KY, which (though by no means "local") is only about 3 hours away from where I live (I purposely chose a drink where the ingredients weren't imported from somewhere crazy-far). Still, going to Applebee's is pretty much the antithesis of what my project requires. Second oops.

So, given all that- mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa- I apologize to the gods of ethical eating and won't let myself slip up any more. Let it be noted in the annals of my log that thus far, the biggest hold-ups to my quest for ethical consumerism have not been the cold I encounter while dumpster-diving, nor the availability of fair-trade hygiene products, but has been the social pressure to join people for a fun night out.

One cool thing I did do a few days ago for my project was that I planted onions in my apartment, in the hopes that I'll soon have a stock of green onions to eat. My cat is a menace (a really really cute menace) and will obliterate anything remotely resembling a plant, and cats aren't really supposed to eat onions, so I devised a way to create hanging planters out of old containers. I had four dumpster-dived onions that had sprouted and started to go mushy on their outer layers, so I planted those in a mixture of potting soil, coffee grounds that I took from the place where I intern, and coconut coir. After potting the onions I used yarn to hang them from a curtain-rod by our sliding glass door. I would say so far, Operation Cat-Proof Dumpster-Dived Homegrown Green Onions is a success.



FEBRUARY 24 JOURNAL

Menu of the 22nd:

- Breakfast was dumpster-dived oatmeal with chopped apple.
- Lunch was black beans (leftover from before project- I have three cans in my cupboard left) with dumpster-dived canned tomato, farmer's market onion and garlic, and dumpster-dived potato.
- Dinner was scrambled egg with onion (both from the farmer's market.)
- I also had several cups of fair-trade tea throughout the day.

Yesterday's menu:

- Breakfast was a "venti" cup of plain Starbucks coffee that I had found abandoned (and apparently untouched) in a campus hallway around midnight the night before. Maybe one of my riskier scavenged comestibles (who knows what crazy college kids are spiking their abandoned coffee with these days), but I drank it (with dumpster-dived vanilla creamer added) and am none the worse off.
- Lunch was more of my beans/tomatoes/potatoes mixture and a jar of fair-trade Earl Grey tea.
- Dinner was white rice with olive oil, farmer's market onions, and curry powder, as well as an apple (from the guy at my church).

Today's menu:

- Breakfast was a dumpster-dived whole grain dinner roll spread with a little bit of fair-trade coconut oil, plus a jar of fair trade chai tea.
- Lunch was dumpster-dived oatmeal with a little flax and buckwheat flour added (leftover in my pantry from before the project) for extra protein and fiber.
- Dinner was 2 scrambled farmer's market eggs with a dumpster-dived potato and farmer's market red onion.

I just got back from dumpster diving (finally got around to it!) and got a lot of good stuff, including some potatoes and sweet potatoes, a large bag of off-brand "Apple Jacks" cereal, four avocados (which I am disproportionately excited about), four sticks of margarine, eight tomatoes, a bag of grapes, a bottle of vegetable oil (which is good since I am almost out of olive oil), two green peppers and one yellow, three cucumbers, a bag of collard greens, three French-vanilla éclairs, four loaves of sandwich bread, a butternut squash, a head of cauliflower, a bag of white rice (like I needed more of that), a bag of apples, and a bag of navel oranges. It's going to be really nice to have fresh fruits and vegetables for more meals now.

That is another issue with this project that I have encountered- unless I go dumpster diving once a week (which is hard to do with my schedule and with the recent sub-zero temperatures) I run out of fresh vegetables pretty quickly. After the first couple weeks following a dive, my diet starts to be composed of more starches and less vitamin-dense foods. These problems are pretty exclusive to winter, though- in the summer, when I have dumpster-dived before, it is easier to keep fresh veggies in my fridge throughout the month.

FEBRUARY 25 JOURNAL

Today's menu:

- Breakfast was a dumpster-dived donut (so healthy, I know) and some homegrown mint tea.
- For lunch I made a curry using dumpster-dived potatoes, tomatoes, cauliflower, and onions, as well as rice and curry powder from before the project. I topped it with dumpster-dived avocado- so good. I've missed avocados.
- As a snack today I had some dry off-brand Apple Jacks cereal and fair-trade Earl Grey tea.
- For dinner I had more of the curry (topped with more avocado) and more Earl Grey tea.

Since I have avocados back in my life again (for at least a short period of time) I thought I would list a couple things I miss as an ethical consumer:

- Store-bought soy and almond milk
- Being able to pick up exotic produce like star-fruit and avocados from the store whenever I want
- Chinese takeout
- Fresh greens whenever I want
- Berries

Overall, though, the variety of food I've been able to get from dumpsters, fair trade, or locally has been diverse enough that I haven't felt deprived, and it feels good to know that the goods I'm consuming aren't coming to me at the cost of the environment's or another human's wellbeing.

You'll notice my list of things I miss doesn't have any non-food goods on it, and that's because it's been surprisingly easy to acquire everything else I need in as ethical a way as possible. I've already written about my success with finding ethical personal hygiene products, and I haven't needed any new clothes or household items. If I do at any point, though, I know that it will be

fairly easy to acquire whatever I need from the many secondhand stores and flea markets here in Muncie.

FEBRUARY 28 JOURNAL

The 26th's menu:

- Breakfast was 1 ½ a dumpster-dived navel orange and a jar of fair trade plum-flavored white tea from Zhená's Gypsy Teas.
- Lunch was the curry I made last night, plus the other half of the orange I ate for breakfast and a jar of fair-trade Earl Grey tea.
- Dinner was dumpster-dived bread, toasted and topped with dumpster-dived avocado and salt.

The 27th's menu:

- Breakfast was a smoothie made with ½ a dumpster-dived cucumber, ½ a dumpster-dived avocado, some dumpster-dived instant oats, and farmer's market honey.
- Lunch was two pieces of toasted dumpster-dived bread, one slice topped with the other half of the avocado and one slice topped with dumpster-dived margarine and farmer's market honey. I also had a small bowl of the curry I made a few days ago, and some fair-trade chai tea.
- For dinner I had more curry.

Today's menu:

- For breakfast I made another green smoothie with dumpster-dived cucumber, avocado, and oats, and farmer's market honey. These smoothies are absolutely delicious and really easy and filling as well.
- For lunch I had the last of the curry. Afterwards I went out and spent some time hanging out with my brother who was visiting Muncie for a high school band clinic. We went to The Cup, a local coffee shop near campus and I got a cup of fair-trade coffee. I didn't ask what particular brand it was, but the carafe I got the brew out of said that the coffee was certified fair trade. The shop didn't appear to have any fair trade sugar, though, so I had my drink black.
- For dinner I made some dumpster-dived pasta and topped it with black beans that I had left over and some dumpster-dived mozzarella cheese. I also had half of a grape tart, which I made tonight using [this recipe](#). The tarts included:
 - 1 ½ cup dumpster-dived all-purpose flour

- 10 tbsp. dumpster-dived margarine
- 1/2 tsp. dumpster-dived salt
- 1/2 bag dumpster-dived green grapes
- 1 tbsp. fair trade sugar

I made a basic pie crust dough with the flour, margarine, and salt, plus some ice water, and chilled it for an hour before rolling it into two crusts for the tarts. I filled the crusts with grapes and a little sugar, then baked everything at 350 degrees for about an hour.



Grapes, especially if they have been frozen and thawed, have a tendency to go mushy in my fridge really quickly, so this recipe is a great way to use them up before they have a chance to go bad. It's definitely not as healthy as eating straight grapes, but I still have half of a bag of fresh grapes should I need a snack that doesn't have a whole stick of margarine in it.

MARCH 3 JOURNAL

March 1 Menu:

This day marked the beginning of the third month of my project- I have successfully completed two full months of ethical consuming, with only a couple slip ups.

- For breakfast I had a large jar of fair-trade chair tea.
- For lunch I had one farmer's market scrambled egg on a slice of dumpster-dived 12-grain toast.
- For dinner I made dumpster-dived spaghetti topped with sautéed dumpster-dived onions and garlic and raw dumpster-dived tomatoes.

March 2 Menu:

- For breakfast I had leftover dumpster-dived spaghetti with dumpster-dived tomatoes and onion.
- Lunch was a dumpster-dived orange and apple, plus a slice of dumpster-dived 12-grain toast topped with some peanut butter I found in the back of my fridge, left over from before the project.
- For dinner I had more spaghetti, this time topped with some fair-trade coconut oil, chopped dumpster-dived yellow bell pepper, curry powder, and coriander from my garden.

March 3 Menu:

- For breakfast I made an omelet with two farmer's market eggs, a dumpster-dived yellow onion, and some dumpster-dived mozzarella cheese.
- I skipped lunch because I was caught up in a frenzy of house cleaning- it's spring break for me (though you can't tell by the foot of snow outside) so I'm getting all the house work done that I haven't been able to do during the school week. I did have a large jar of fair trade Earl Grey tea though.
- My friend Victoria came over around 4:00 today to watch Legally Blonde with me, because I've made it the whole 1 years since it came out without ever seeing it. We also watched "The Queen of Versailles," which is a documentary about a billionaire family "suffering" through the economic recession that began in 2008. Watching the family members in the film become enslaved by money and the pursuit of buying more and more and more really reaffirmed my confidence in my project. Anyway, while we watched we had some popcorn that was left over from before my project began.
- For dinner I finished off the dumpster-dived spaghetti I made the other day and had a glass of blackberry wine from Huber Winery, which is located in Indiana about 150 miles from Muncie.

A couple discoveries I've made in the past few days:

I've discovered that brushing my teeth with baking soda alone has become a little too harsh on my gums. It's just a bit too abrasive. I found out, though, that a mixture of baking soda and coconut oil can be a really good toothpaste. I'm using that now, with my Dr. Bronner's fair trade coconut oil.

I have also discovered that if a butternut squash is completely frozen through when you find it in the dumpster, it will not be edible when it thaws. No, instead it will be mush that smells a little like a dumpster. Boo. That is one downside of diving in the winter.

I have also discovered that when butternut squashes turn to mush in your kitchen, you should not decide to put the whole thing down the garbage disposal because you are too lazy to save it up

for your compost pile. If you put said squash down the disposal, it will clog the pipes and cause the sink to almost overflow, at which point you will have to bail out the sink and manually unclog it. Fun times.

MARCH 11 JOURNAL

This past week was spring break so things were a little weird for this project.

I traveled back to Bloomington to visit family, staying with my in-laws and my parents for a few days each. As the beginning of this project showed, staying with family makes hardcore ethical consuming a little difficult, especially when food is concerned. It also makes blogging a challenge. Long story short, I ate ethically whenever it was possible.

For example, on Thursday evening (March 5th) my husband and mother-in-law and I went down to Wilmore, Kentucky to see one of my sisters-in-law's college plays. While there we stopped to eat – I got food from a small, locally-owned coffee and sandwich shop and chose their fair-trade brew to drink and a vegetable sandwich to eat over a different type of coffee or the four-cheese quiche my family ate. All the food was in reusable dishes.

I'm lucky that both my in-laws and parents see the value of fair-trade products, because that ensured I had ethically produced coffee and tea throughout my stays with them. Other things I ate while with my family included leftover spaghetti, oatmeal with almond milk, several salads, Triscuits (I had forgotten how delicious those are), and trail mix made with dried cranberries and almonds. I was consistently vegan throughout this week, since dairy and eggs do have a larger environmental and social impact than non-animal products and I didn't bring my farmer's market eggs with me.

I did try to minimize the amount of other non-ethical things (such as personal hygiene goods) that I consumed while visiting. I brought my own fair-trade coconut oil/baking soda toothpaste, of course, as well as other things like the bottle of Desert Essence lavender lotion (organic! biodegradable! cruelty-free!) that I've had for about a year and the fair trade tea tree oil I use in an attempt to combat the menace that is adult acne. I was also able to snatch some baking soda from my mom to wash my hair with one of the nights (whoops, did I just reveal I only wash my hair about once a week when I'm not working out? All hail the ponytail).

When I came home on Saturday my refrigerator was kind of bare, and I still have not gotten out to go dumpster diving to replenish it. That means that over the past week, I have eaten a lot of dumpster-dived apples, a lot of farmer's market eggs (usually accompanied with dumpster-dived onions and/or potatoes), dumpster-dived oatmeal, rice (that was left over from before the project and will probably actually last forever), and some Bob's Red Mill gluten-free cinnamon-raisin bread that I made from a mix that has been in my cupboard for over a year, as well as dumpster-

dived canola oil and farmer's market eggs. I top the bread with either dumpster-dived margarine or farmer's market honey.

So far today all I've eaten are two slices of said cinnamon-raisin bread with some dumpster-dived margarine and a dumpster-dived apple. Later tonight I'll be going dumpster-diving, so hopefully I will be able to get some awesome, healthy stuff from that. Updates later.

MARCH 12 JOURNAL

Well, I lied. I didn't end up going dumpster diving last evening- I did homework til 1 AM instead and then fell asleep.

As a result of my continuing general lack of nutritious food, here is today's menu:

- Breakfast was two NutriGrain Bars- I forgot to mention that over break my husband recovered several boxes of NutriGrain Bars and a box of Swiss Miss hot chocolate packets that had been thrown away! HOT CHOCOLATE, YOU GUYS. My excitement is unprecedented. So in homage to my inner 8 year old I also had hot chocolate with my NutriGrain. Ugh, so much sugar.
- Lunch was one dumpster-dived granny smith apple, chopped and mixed in with dumpster-dived oatmeal. I feel the need to remind everyone that I found all those oatmeal packets in like January or something- they, like my bag of rice, are apparently everlasting. Which is great because oatmeal is delicious and not horrible for you.
- After lunch I had a big jar of fair-trade chai tea- and then I discovered that it was the last of my fair trade tea bags. I will have to order some more or stop by the Downtown Farm Stand to pick some up.
- For dinner I had an omelet made with farmer's market eggs, dumpster-dived mozzarella cheese, and dumpster-dived onion.

Basically onions have been the only vegetable on my plate for several days now, and I can tell it's starting to take its toll. I was exhausted during and after exercising yesterday morning and my stomach hasn't been feeling the greatest. But that's all about to change!

I finally got around to hitting the dumpster this evening and came back with three bags of sweet Hawaiian rolls (okay, so that won't help with my nutrition issue), three heads of cauliflower (yay!), and a head of lettuce (yay yay!). Not a large haul by usual standards, but a good start to get my veggies restocked. The weekend is coming up, so I can always go dumpster-diving again then.

MARCH 14 JOURNAL

March 13th menu:

- Breakfast was a salad made with dumpster-dived lettuce and olive oil.
- Lunch was two Nutri- Grain bars and a second salad, this time with some dumpster-dived thousand-island dressing.
- For dinner I had scrambled farmer's market eggs with some dumpster-dived yellow onion, plus one slice of dumpster-dived whole grain toast topped with farmer's market honey.

Today's menu:

- Breakfast was a bowl of dumpster-dived Apple Jacks cereal with almond milk that my mom gave to me after spring break.
- Lunch was a small dumpster-dived lettuce/thousand-island salad, a dumpster-dived granny smith apple, and a bowl of the roasted cauliflower soup I made today.
- For dinner I had a salad (same as the one I had for lunch), a Hawaiian roll, and green-bean casserole made with dumpster-dived canned green beans, half a can of dumpster-dived cream of mushroom soup, and two small farmer's market red onions.

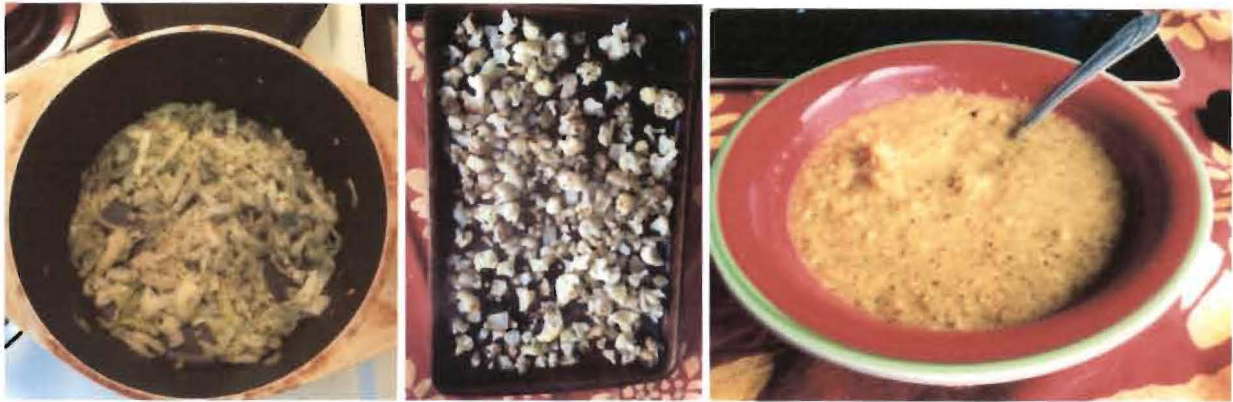


Since I got three heads of cauliflower from my last dumpster-diving trip I took the opportunity to cook some of that today. I roasted two heads and used one to make soup- the other head I'll just keep for snacking.

The soup wasn't from a specific recipe, I just threw together some things I had, and it turned out really well. Here is what I included:

- Two dumpster-dived yellow onions
- Three cloves of farmer's market garlic
- One head roasted dumpster-dived cauliflower
- Half a can of dumpster-dived cream of mushroom soup (the half I didn't use with the green beans)

- Two soy sauce packets from husband's Chinese takeout
- About a tablespoon of curry powder that I had left over from before the project (never-ending, just like my rice and oatmeal)



It was delicious, and made enough that I'll have meals from it for a few days. Plus, I have another whole head of raw cauliflower still at my disposal.

I've updated most of my informational pages about this project by now, so check them out! In those I explain/cite my reasons for undertaking this experiment.

MARCH 15 JOURNAL

Today's menu:

I worked this morning so didn't have breakfast, per se- when I got home from work around 10:50 I had an early lunch of roasted cauliflower soup.

My second meal of the day (around 3:00) was salad made with dumpster-dived lettuce, cucumber, and thousand island.

I had one homemade muffin for a snack: I don't much like eating plain Nutri-Grain bars by themselves very frequently since they are so sweet, so I decided to use a few of them for baking. I made the muffins using:

- 6 dumpster-dived Nutri-Grain bars (3 blueberry and 3 strawberry), food processed into crumbs
- 1 cup dumpster-dived flour
- ½ cup dumpster-dived oats
- 1 farmer's market egg
- ¼ cup dumpster-dived vegetable oil

- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon baking powder

I didn't need to add any extra sugar, which was nice since fair-trade sugar can be kind of pricey. The muffins turned out astonishingly well- they're very light and fruity.



For dinner I had a second bowl of roasted cauliflower soup. If you had told me three years ago that I would be heartily enjoying a dish made from a cruciferous vegetable I would have called you crazy- but this stuff is delicious.

In addition to consuming ethically and consuming less, I'm also trying to rid myself of unnecessary goods that I already own. I've gone through my closet several times over the past few weeks and am slowly getting rid of clothes I don't really wear anymore. I'm generally a very sentimentally materialistic person- I have trouble getting rid of things because I associate them with people, places, or times that I care about, but I always feel so much better after taking a load of clothes to a secondhand store.

MARCH 17 JOURNAL

March 16 Menu:

- For breakfast I had one muffin made from dumpster-dived ingredients.
- For lunch I had roasted cauliflower.
- For a snack I finished off the last of my roasted cauliflower soup.
- For dinner I had dumpster-dived macaroni and cheese and a dumpster-dived apple.

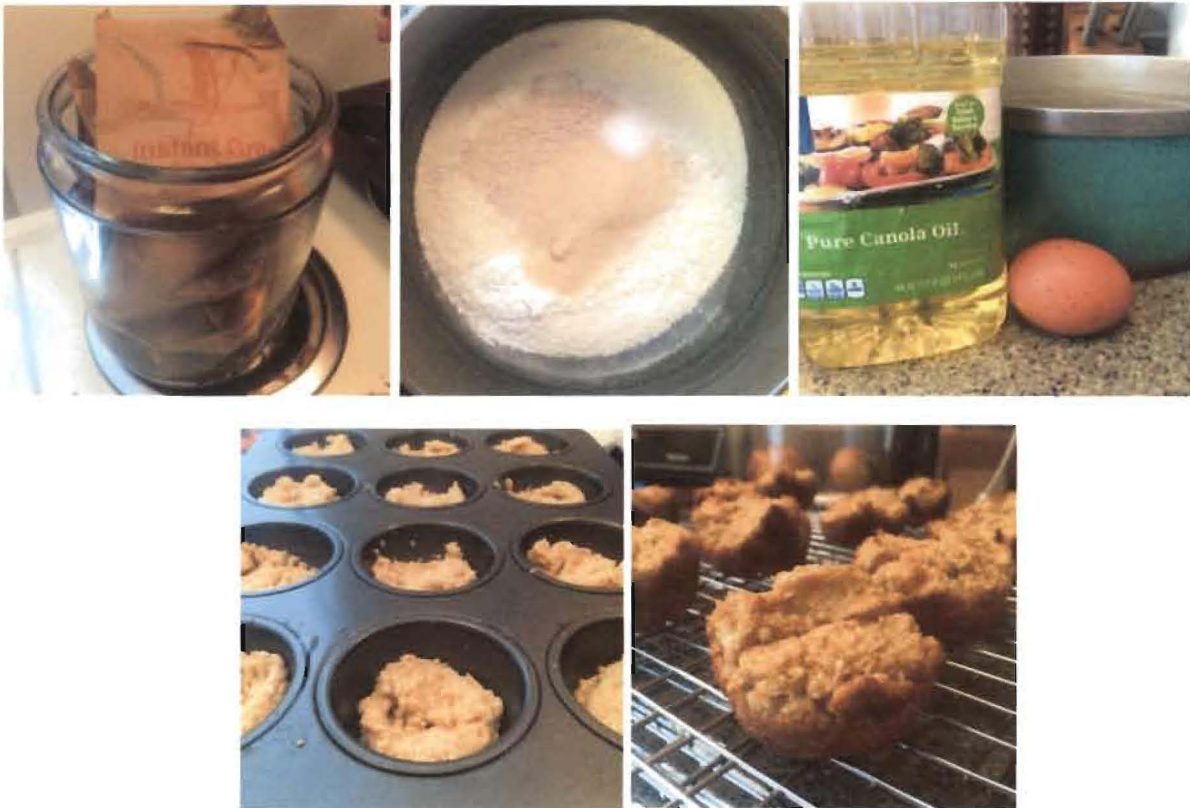
March 17 Menu:

- For breakfast I had whole-grain dumpster-dived toast and homegrown peppermint tea.

- For lunch I made dumpster-dived white rice and added farmer's market red onion and garlic, as well as homegrown coriander and curry powder and green onions from my hanging planters. I figured this project would be the best time to break into the rice I dumpster-dived a few weeks ago, even though I still have almost a full bag of basmati rice.

After class I made some corn muffins using the following:

- 1 ½ cups dumpster-dived corn grits
- ½ cup dumpster-dived flour
- ¼ cup fair-trade sugar
- ¼ cup dumpster-dived vegetable oil
- 1 farmer's market egg
- ½ tsp dumpster-dived salt
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup water



They didn't puff up very much, probably because the batter was very coarse from the grits, but I had one for a snack and it was super tasty.

- For dinner I had a dumpster-dived apple and some roasted cauliflower.

MARCH 18 JOURNAL

March 18 Menu:

- For breakfast I had two corn muffins with farmer's market honey.
- For lunch I made more roasted cauliflower soup- just like I made a few days ago, but minus the cream of mushroom soup. Still delicious, still made with dumpster-dived and farmer's market ingredients.
- For dinner I had a small bowl of my dumpster-dived rice with dumpster onions and farmer's market garlic, as well as another bowl of cauliflower soup. It was all quite filling. I also had a Flat 12 Amber Ale.

Today I am exactly two weeks away from concluding my project- granted, I will still have a bunch of writing and compiling to do before my thesis is ready to turn into my University, but the actual experiment portion is winding up soon.

In some ways, it feel like three months has gone by really quickly and easily, and most days it feels like my diet and lifestyle aren't greatly altered from what they were like before I began this project.

In other ways the project has been challenging- mostly in the times when my husband orders things like Chinese or Mediterranean takeout and I can't have any or when Lil Bub comes out with a new line of t-shirts. But in all seriousness, it is often a challenge to have to more or less constantly monitor what I'm consuming and make contentious decisions to not consume certain things. And certainly, it was a big challenge to go dumpster-diving in sub-zero weather instead of getting to go to a nice temperature-controlled supermarket.

I'm happy that I've embarked upon this journey, though. Given that the modern method of "first-world" consumerism has a tendency to exploit and harm many people, biota, and ecosystems, it feels validating to know that it is possible to avoid contributing to such a system.

MARCH 20 JOURNAL

Today's menu:

I had a big breakfast today because I knew I'd have a later lunch than usual due to a meeting for work- a big bowl of roasted cauliflower soup, the last Nutri-Grain muffin, and a corn muffin.

For lunch I had the last half-cup or so of my dumpster-dived onion/garlic rice as well as a second corn muffin.

For dinner I made fried rice from dumpster-dived rice and onion, and farmer's market eggs and garlic plus leftover Chinese takeout soy sauce and dumpster-dived vegetable oil. Very tasty, and it had a good amount of protein, but I am kind of over rice. It makes me super bloated. But that is all good and fine, because:...

My husband and I just got back from dumpster diving and we got SO MANY FRUITS AND VEGGIES!

Our haul tonight was two heads of lettuce, two cartons of strawberries, three cucumbers, a green bell pepper, a crudité tray with baby carrots, broccoli, and celery, and a carton of blueberries! Very exciting. We also got a box of crackers, two boxes of shell-shaped pasta, and a packet of cheese sauce that lost its box of macaroni.



MARCH 21 JOURNAL

March 20 Menu:

- Breakfast today was a smoothie made with dumpster-dived strawberries and cucumber and farmer's market honey. I also had the last morsel of dumpster-dived fried rice with farmer's market scrambled egg from last night's dinner
- Lunch was a salad made with dumpster-dived lettuce, cucumber, and thousand-island dressing.
- For a snack I had a corn muffin.
- For dinner I made dumpster-dived pasta with sautéed dumpster-dived carrots, celery, green pepper, and broccoli, topped with dumpster-dived mozzarella cheese. After dinner I had a Flat-12 porter while watching Mythbusters with my husband.



I accompanied my husband to the grocery store today. Every time I go to a place like Meijer or something, I am reminded how crazy it is that it is so easy for us to find such a wide assortment of foods in such a short period of time. I was also reminded how much I miss black olives- oh boy. Black olives might be my favorite food and I have not had them in sooooo long. I wonder if there are fair trade olives.

March 21:

Today was a farmer's market day! The weekly market doesn't start up here til May, but even today's monthly winter market had some fantastic produce.

I was able to buy two acorn squashes and two butternut squashes for a total of two dollars, eight heads of garlic for two dollars, \$7 worth of shallots, a bag of spinach for \$4, kale for \$3.75, and cilantro for \$2, a jar of raw honey for \$8, and a dozen eggs from Becker Farms for \$4.50.





The third of the month came at the perfect time, too, because I ran out of onions two days ago and honey yesterday. Perfect timing.

So, today's menu:

- For breakfast I had dumpster-dived oatmeal with dumpster-dived strawberries.
- For lunch, I had a salad made with dumpster-dived lettuce, dumpster-dived cucumber, and farmer's market spinach topped with dumpster-dived thousand island.
- Then for dinner, I had some more dumpster-dived pasta, this time topped with farmer's market shallots and kale, plus some olive oil. It's so nice to have three meals a day that include vegetables and fruits.

MARCH 25 JOURNAL

March 22 Menu:

- For breakfast today I didn't eat a lot since, it being a Sunday, I had to work early. I had homegrown peppermint tea and dumpster-dived Hawaiian roll.
- I did have an early lunch/brunch, though: scrambled farmer's market eggs with farmer's market shallots, garlic, and spinach. It is delightful to have all these greens at my

disposal- I should have gotten more at the market, because I bet these won't last a week before I eat them all.

- For a snack I had a salad made with dumpster-dived lettuce, green bell pepper, and cucumber, plus farmer's market kale and spinach, all topped with dumpster-dived thousand island dressing
- Dinner was fried rice (definitely a comfort-food weakness). I included as many vegetables as I could in this batch, though, because the last time I made it I felt terrible after eating it. So with my dumpster-dived white rice (which I fried in dumpster-dived canola oil), I had dumpster-dived carrots and green bell pepper, farmer's market garlic, shallots, and kale, and farmer's market eggs. I topped it all with soy sauce left over from the time my husband got Chinese takeout like a month ago. This was a delicious dinner, and it had a high enough ratio of veggies and protein to my simple starches that I felt completely fine after eating.

March 23 Menu

- On Mondays I work out first thing in the morning, and I rarely want to eat before I do so. However, I did have a mug of dumpster-dived instant hot cocoa before heading out to exercise.
- For an early lunch I had some dumpster-dived white rice with dumpster-dived green bell pepper, farmer's market kale, fair trade coconut oil, homegrown coriander, and a sprinkling of curry powder that I still have left over from, like, November.
- For a snack I had dumpster-dived strawberries sprinkled with a little fair-trade sugar.
- Dinner was leftover fried rice from yesterday's dinner- even though I've had two meals featuring rice today, I'm making sure to put plenty of vegetables in with them as well as some sort of protein- in the case of the fried rice, scrambled farmer's market eggs.

March 24 Menu

- This morning I made dumpster-dived oatmeal and topped it with my dumpster-dived blueberries. Delicious.
- Lunch was dumpster-dived white rice with farmer's market spinach, dumpster-dived mozzarella, homegrown dill and thyme.
- For a snack I had a salad made with dumpster-dived lettuce, farmer's market spinach, dumpster-dived cucumber, and dumpster-dived Thousand Island dressing.
- Dinner was scrambled farmer's market eggs with farmer's market shallots and kale.

March 25 Menu:

- For breakfast today I had some dumpster-dived instant hot chocolate. Quick breakfasts on busy mornings are hard to manage, I should make some more muffins or something so I can eat a little bit more before going to work out.
- For lunch I had a salad made with dumpster-dived lettuce and cucumber, farmer's market spinach and kale, and dumpster-dived Thousand Island dressing. I also had an omelet made with farmer's market eggs, spinach, and shallots, dumpster-dived mozzarella.
- Dinner was dumpster-dived white rice with farmer's market spinach, kale, cilantro, and shallots; homegrown coriander, fair trade coconut oil, and curry powder left over from before project.

Another thing I consumed today was a bit out of the ordinary: I had a dermatology appointment this morning and was prescribed a round of antibiotics and two different topical treatments in a last-ditch effort to get rid of the acne I've had pretty much constantly for the last decade. I've been trying to manage this condition with homemade soap and fair-trade tea tree oil, but it just wasn't cutting it and I had to bring out the big guns.

Ethical consumption of medical products is tricky, since almost everything has to go through rounds of animal testing before it can be approved by the FDA. This isn't something I necessarily approve of, but I don't see any other alternatives at this point. When I purchase goods such as cosmetics, personal hygiene products, or cleaning products, I make sure to always buy things that are certified "cruelty-free" and haven't been tested on animals at any point in their development. This is a harder standard to apply to medicines, though, since the stakes are usually higher in the ways they are tested.

In the past, I've worked hard to treat my acne only with "natural" products that aren't tested on animals and are comprised of responsibly-sourced ingredients; Desert Essences and Burt's Bees have a line of skincare products that work well for some people. However, it's gotten to a point where nothing I've tried works for any period of time, and my acne has become not only unsightly, but pretty physically uncomfortable as well.

I guess I can crowdsource a little bit here; if my current line of treatment fails as well, can anyone recommend a "natural" or "ethical" acne solution that has worked for them? I'm always looking for new ideas.

MARCH 26 JOURNAL

Today's Menu:

- For breakfast I made dumpster-dived oatmeal and strawberries.
- Lunch was a salad made with dumpster-dived lettuce and cucumber, farmer's market spinach, dumpster-dived mozzarella cheese and thousand-island dressing.

- For dinner I made more fried rice- dumpster-dived white rice, dumpster-dived canola oil, dumpster-dived carrots, and farmer's market eggs and kale.

Later in the evening my husband and I went to the annual meeting of the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District. The meeting had a meal catered by a local small-scale pig farmer (Grand Grilling to Go) but Colin and I only ate some of their cookies and bread, since everything else predictably had meat in it. The meeting also featured a wine tasting of local, Indiana wines. One that I drank was a white Traminette from Muncie's own Tonne Winery– the Traminette is also considered Indiana's state wine, so you can't get much more local than that. It was a little too sweet for me, though. I prefer Tonne's dry Catawba.

Among the other things I consumed were my round of antibiotics and my topical medications from the dermatologist.

MARCH 28 JOURNAL

March 27 Menu:

I decided to have a proper (if small) breakfast before exercising this morning- just a bowl of dumpster-dived oatmeal topped with about a teaspoon of fair-trade sugar.

For lunch I made a salad with the last of my farmer's market spinach (didn't even last a week), dumpster-dived lettuce, some farmer's market shallots, dumpster-dived cucumber, and some dumpster-dived thousand island.

For a snack I had two pieces of toasted dumpster-dived bread with farmer's market honey.

Dinner was more fried rice with tons of veggies- my dumpster-dived white rice was cooked with dumpster-dived carrots, farmer's market shallots, garlic, and kale, and then topped with some farmer's market cilantro and shredded dumpster-dived lettuce.

After dinner, Colin and I went out to Savage's downtown. I ordered Three Floyds' "Robert the Bruce" – or as Colin calls it, "bread in a glass." Ah, it's nice to live in a place that has so many awesome breweries and wineries so nearby.

March 28 Menu:

Today was one of the first Saturdays in a while that I haven't had anything on my schedule, so I got to sleep in a little bit. It was heaven. For a late breakfast/lunch I had the rest of my fried rice from last night, again topped with more cilantro (the last of it!) and shredded lettuce.

For dinner today I got into the acorn and butternut squashes I got last week at the farmer's market, making some butternut muffins and acorn squash soup. I also made more muffins from the recipe I used here.

I based my butternut squash muffins off [this recipe](#) and modified it a little bit, using the following:

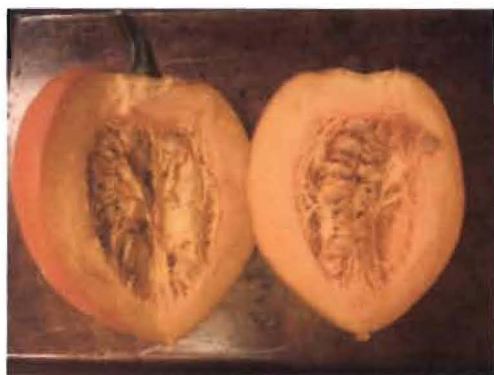
- 2 cups dumpster-dived flour
- 2 tbsp. ground flax (left over from before project)
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp dumpster-dived salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon (left over from before project)
- 1 farmer's market butternut squash, roasted and pureed (about 3 cups)
- 1/3 cup farmer's market raw honey
- 1 farmer's market egg



The butternut muffins were great- not too sweet and very hearty. I ate one with my dinner.

I got the idea for my acorn squash soup from [this recipe](#), though I modified it quite a bit since I didn't have any leeks or vegetable stock. Here's what I used:

- 1 farmer's market acorn squash, roasted and pureed
- 1 tbsp. dumpster-dived vegetable oil
- 4 farmer's market shallots
- 3 cloves farmer's market garlic
- 1 tbsp. each homegrown dill, thyme, and rosemary
- 1 tbsp. dumpster-dived salt
- Seeds from butternut and acorn squashes, roasted



The soup was absolutely delicious. I kind of wanted to eat the entire pot at once, but I just stuck to one bowl.

I only have three more days left of this project, which is kind of hard to believe! It will be nice to not have to monitor every single thing I consume, but I'll definitely be holding on to as many of these standards as possible. In just a month the farmer's market will happen once a week, and I'll be able to get almost all of my produce and my eggs there. I'll continue dumpster-diving to get things like bread and non-seasonal fruits and veggies (and whatever else I can find!). I'll keep buying fair trade whenever that option is available- coconut oil, coffee, tea, chocolate, and the like. Even things like soap and housewares are readily available fair trade! I'll work to only buy things like clothes when they're necessary, and only then when they're secondhand or fair trade. Throughout this project I don't think I've actually had to buy any new clothes, and I've definitely gotten rid of some. There will be some things I do look forward to being able to get from a regular store, however; try as I might, I have not been able to find fair trade or dumpster-dived beans! Before the project chickpeas were a staple for me – now, the only fair-trade chickpea I can find has to be bought online and ships from Uzbekistan, which seems like it would take more time, money, and transportation than it's worth. So it will be nice to be able to have those in my life again. The Downtown Farm Stand does sell giant cans of organic chickpeas, so maybe I can buy those and support a local business while I get my garbanzo fix.

MARCH 30 JOURNAL

March 29 Menu:

- For breakfast I had two homemade muffins; one “nutri-grain” and one butternut squash.
- For lunch, I had a bowl of my acorn-squash soup, as well as the rest of the toasted squash seeds.
- For a snack I finished off the rest of my dumpster-dived lettuce and made a salad with it, as well as with some farmer’s market shallots and dumpster-dived Thousand Island dressing.
- For dinner I had another bowl of soup.

I ran through my first tube of homemade coconut oil deodorant today- luckily, I made more than enough and had some ready to go in my refrigerator. I just melted it in the microwave and refilled the tube- surprisingly, there was still some left over even after that. One tube of this deodorant lasted me over two months- it seems like other store-bought deodorants lasted longer, but I’ve never actually kept track. And really, the initial batch I made seems like it will be about five months’ worth of deodorant. Which is great, since I think it’s worked really well as a product. My only complaint is that if it sits in a too-warm area (like my bathroom when I have the heat cranked up because it’s the dead of winter) the mixture liquefies, and the baking soda/cornstarch settles to the bottom. This can easily be fixed by sticking the whole tube in some hot water to liquefy the deodorant again, then pouring it all out and mixing it up.

March 30 Menu:

- For breakfast I had the rest of my dumpster-dived strawberries and a butternut squash muffin.
- For lunch, I finished off the last bit of acorn squash soup. I knew I’d want more soup for dinner and tomorrow, though, so I made another batch with a butternut squash- same recipe otherwise, though. I’d intended on saving the squash’s seeds as a garnish for the soup but instead I just ate them all the second I finished toasting them. They are too good.
- For dinner I had another butternut squash muffin with farmer’s market raw honey, and another bowl of butternut squash soup. I also had a Flat-12 Amber Ale.